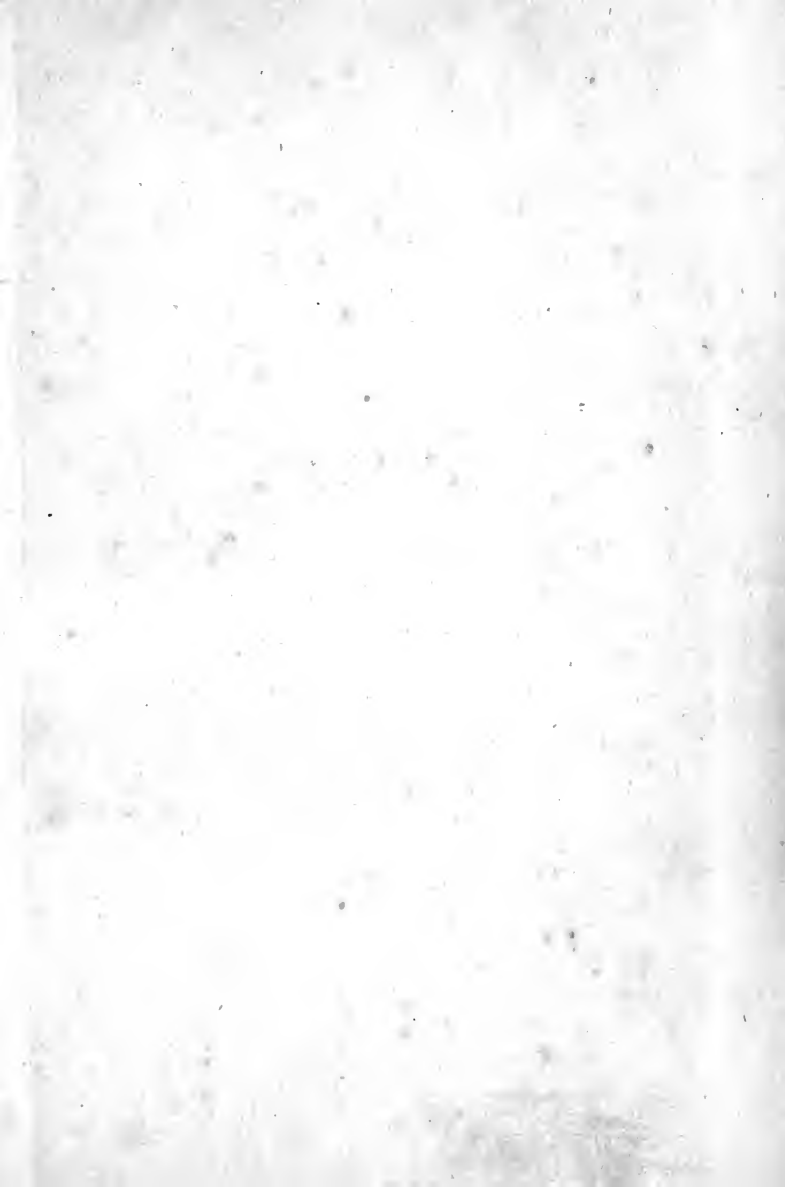


ARMINELL

BY
S. BARING
GOULD





ARMINELL

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

IN THE ROAR OF THE SEA
THE QUEEN OF LOVE
CHEAP JACK ZITA
MRS. CURGENVEN OF CURGENVEN
ARMINELL
JACQUETTA
URITH
KITTY ALONE
MARGERY OF QUETHER
NOÉMI
THE BROOM-SQUIRE
DARTMOOR IDYLLS
GUAVAS THE TINNER

ARMINELL

A SOCIAL ROMANCE

BY

S. BARING-GOULD

FOURTH EDITION

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET, W.C.
LONDON
1896

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ARMINELL.

CHAPTER I.

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL on the ground floor of the keeper's cottage that stood against the churchyard, in a piece nibbled out of holy ground. Some old folks said this cottage had been the church-house where in ancient days the people who came to divine service stayed between morning prayer and evensong, ate their mid-day meal and gave out and received their hebdomadal quotient of gossip. But such days were long over, the house had been used as a keeper's lodge for at least a hundred years. The basement consisted of one low hall exactly six feet one inch from the floor to rafters. There was no ceiling between it and the upper house—only a flooring laid on the rafters. In the pre-traditional days the men had sat and eaten and drunk in the room above, and the women in that below, between services, and their horses had been stabled where now the keeper had his kennel.

The basement chamber was paved with slabs of slate. Rats infested the lodge, they came after the bones and biscuits left by the dogs. The pheasants' food was kept there, the keeper's wife dropped her dripping, and the

children were not scrupulous about finishing their crusts. The rats undermined the slates, making runs beneath the pavement to get at the box of dog biscuits, and the sacks of buckwheat, and the parcels of peppercorns; consequently the slates were not firm to walk on. Moreover, in the floor was a sunless secret cellar, of but eighteen inches in depth, for the reception of liquor, or laces or silks that had not paid the excise. The slates over this place, long disused, were infirm and inclined to let whoever stepped on them down.

During the week the keeper's wife washed in the basement and slopped soapy water about, that ran between the slates and formed puddles, lurking under corners, and when, on Sunday, the incautious foot rested on an angle of slate, the slab tilted and squirted forth the stale unsavoury water.

The room, as already said, was unceiled. The rafters were of solid oak; the boards above were of deal, and had shrunk in places, and in places dropped out the core of their knots. The keeper's children found a pleasure in poking sticks and fingers through, and in lying flat on the floor with an eye on the knot-hole, surveying through it the proceedings in the Sunday-school below.

About the floor in unsystematic arrangement spraddled forms of deal, rubbed by boys' trousers to a polish. Some of these forms were high in the leg, others short. No two were on a level, and no two were of the same length. They were rudely set about the floor in rhomboidal shapes, or rather in trapeziums, which according to Euclid have no defined shapes at all.

There was a large open fireplace at one end of the room, in which in winter a fire of wood burned. When it burned the door had to be left wide open, because of the smoke, consequently Sunday-school was held in winter in a draught. At the extremity of the room, opposite the fireplace, stood Moses and Aaron—not in the flesh, nor even in spirit, but

in "counterfeit presentment" as large as life, rudely painted on board. They had originally adorned the east end of the chancel; when, however, the fashion of restoring churches set in, Orleigh Church had been done up, and Moses and Aaron had been supplanted to make room for a horrible reredos of glazed tiles. One of the Sunday school scholars, a wag, had scribbled mottoes from their mouths, on scrolls, and had made Aaron observe to Moses, "Let us cut off our noses;" to which the meekest of men was made to rejoin, "It is the fashion to wear 'em." But through orthographical weakness, fashion had been spelled *fashum*, and wear 'em had been rendered *warum*.

But why was the Sunday school held in the basement of the keeper's cottage? For the best of good reasons. There was no other room conveniently near the church in which it could be held.

Lady Lamerton could not live in peace without a Sunday school. To her, the obligation to keep the ten commandments was second to the obligation to keep Sunday school. How could the ten commandments be taught, unless there was a Sunday school in which to teach them? How could a Sunday school be held without some teachers to hold it? And who more suitable, more certainly marked out by Providence as the manager of Sunday school than herself? There was, it was true, the Rector's wife, the Reverend Mrs. Cribbage, but the Reverend Mrs. Cribbage was—well to put it mildly, not cut out by nature to be a successful organiser, though she might be an excellent woman. The Reverend Mrs. Cribbage was willing to keep Sunday school, if her ladyship did not, and that would lead to untold mischief, for that reverend lady had a gift for setting everyone by the ears, for stirring, and stirring till she had stirred up strife, where all before was peace.

The buildings of the national school were two miles distant, near the village. The church stood in the grounds of Orleigh Park, and its satellite, the Sunday school, most certainly ought to be near it.

There had been some difficulty about a habitat for the Sunday school. Lady Lamerton had tried to hold it in the laundry of the great house, but the children in muddy weather had brought in so much dirt that no laundry-work could be done in the room on Monday till it had been scoured out. Besides—a fearful discovery had been made, better left to the imagination than particularised. Suffice it to say that after this discovery the children were banished the laundry. It must have come from them. From whom else could it have been derived? The laundry-maids were Aphrodites, foam, or rather soapsud-born, and it could not proceed from such as they. Some said—but nonsense—there is no such a thing as spontaneous generation. Pasteur has exploded that. So all the pupils, with their prayer-books and Ancient-and-Moderns under their arms, made an exodus, and went for a while into an outhouse in the stable-yard. There they did not remain long, for the boys hid behind doors instead of coming in to lessons, and then dived into the stables to see the horses. One of them nearly died from drinking embrocation for spavin, thinking it was cherry-brandy, and another scratched his ignoble name on the panel of one of my lord's carriages, with a pin.

So, on the complaint of the coachman, my lord spoke out, and the Sunday scholars again tucked their prayer-books and hymnals under their arms, and, under the guidance of Lady Lamerton, migrated to a settled habitation in the basement of the keeper's cottage. The place was hardly commodious, but it had its advantages—it was near the church.

Lady Lamerton, who presided over the Sunday-school and collected the Sunday scholars' club-pence, and distributed that dreary brown-paper-covered literature that constituted the Sunday-school lending library, was a middle-aged lady with a thin face and very transparent skin, through which every vein showed. There was not much character in her face, but it possessed a certain delicacy and purity that redeemed it from being uninteresting. She was—it could be read in every feature—a scrupulously conscientious woman, a woman strong in doing her duty, and in that only; one whose head might be and generally was in a profound muddle as to what she believed, but who never for a moment doubted as to what she should do. She would be torn by wild horses rather than not keep Sunday-school, and yet did not know what to teach the children in the school she mustered.

Lady Lamerton, seated on a green garden chair from which the paint was much rubbed away, had about her on three sides of an irregular square the eldest girls of the school. The next class to hers was taken by the Honourable Arminell Inglett, her step-daughter, only child of Lord Lamerton by his first wife.

Miss Inglett was very different in type from her step-mother; a tall, handsome girl, with dark hair cut short, like a boy's, and eyes of violet blue. She had a skin of the purest olive, no rose whatever in her cheeks, as transparent as Lady Lamerton's, but of a warmer tone, like the mellow of an old painting, whereas that of her step-mother had the freshness and crudeness of a picture from the easel sent to the Royal Academy on the first of May.

Arminell differed from Lady Lamerton in expression as completely as in type of feature and colour. She had an unusual breadth of brow, whereas Lady Lamerton's forehead was narrow. Her eyes had not that patient gentleness that filled the dark blue orbs of her ladyship, they were

quick and sparkling. Her lips, somewhat prominent, were full, warm, and contemptuous. She held her head erect, with a curl of the mouth, and a contraction of the brows, that expressed impatience to the task on which she was engaged.

On the left side of Miss Inglett sat Captain Tubb, engaged on the illumination of the souls of the senior boys. Captain Tubb held no commission in the army or navy, not even in the volunteers. He was, in fact, only the manager of a lime-quarry in the parish, on the estate of Lord Lamerton, but such heads over gangs of quarry and mining men bear among the people the courtesy-title of captain.

Mr. Tubb was a short, pale man with shiny face much polished, and with sandy moustache and beard. When he was in perplexity, he put his hand to his mouth, and stroked his moustache, or his beard under the chin, turned it up, and nibbled at the ends.

Some folk said that the captain taught in school so as to stand well with her ladyship, who would speak a word for him to my lord; but the rector thought, more charitably, he did it for his soul's and conscience sake. Captain Tubb was a simple man, except in his business, and in that he was sharp enough. Perhaps he taught a class from mixed motives, and thought it would help him on a bit in both worlds.

"Yes," said Lady Lamerton, "yes, Fanny White, go on. As the list of the canonical books is known to you all, I require you to learn the names of those books which, as the sixth article says, are read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet are not applied to establish any doctrine. After that we will proceed to learn by heart the names of the Homilies, twenty-one in all, given in the thirty-fifth article, which are the more important, because they are not even read and hardly any one has a copy of them. Go on with the uncanonical books. Third Book of Esdras, Fourth Book of Esdras."

"Tobit," whispered the timid Fanny White, and curtsied.

"Quite right, Tobit—go on. It is most important for your soul's health that you should know what books are not canonical, and in their sequence. What comes after Tobit?"

"Judith," faltered Fanny.

"Then a portion of Esther, not found in Hebrew. What next?"

"Wisdom," shouted the next girl, Polly Woodley.

"True, but do not be so forward, Polly; I am asking Fanny White."

"Ecclesiasticks," in a timid, doubtful sigh from Fanny, who raised her eyes to the boards above, detected an eye inspecting her through a knot-hole, laughed, and then turned crimson.

"Not sticks," said Lady Lamerton, sweetly, "you must say—cus."

A dead silence and great doubt fell on the class.

"Yes, go on—cus."

Then faintly from Fanny, "Please, my lady, mother says I b'aint to swear."

"I don't mind," exclaimed the irrepressible Polly Woodley, starting up, and thrusting her hand forward into Lady Lamerton's face. "Darn it."

Her ladyship fell back in her chair; the eye was withdrawn from the hole in the floor, and a laugh exploded upstairs.

"I—I didn't mean that," explained the lady, "I meant, not Ecclesiastics, nor Ecclesiastes, which is canonical, but Ecclesiasti—cus, which is not."

Just then a loud, rolling, grinding sound made itself heard through the school-room, drowning the voices of the teachers and covering the asides of the taught.

"Dear me," said Lady Lamerton, "there is the keeper's wife rocking the cradle again. One of you run upstairs

and ask her very kindly to desist. It is impossible for any one to hear what is going on below with that thunder rolling above."

"Please, my lady," said Polly, peeping up through the nearest knot in the superjacent plank, "it b'aint Mrs. Crooks, it be Bessie as is rocking of the baby. Wicked creetur not to be at school."

"It does not matter who rocks the cradle," said her ladyship, "nor are we justified in judging others. One of you—not all at once—you, Polly Woodley, ask Bessie to leave the cradle alone till later."

The whole school listened breathlessly as the girl went out, tramped up the outside slate steps to the floor occupied by the keeper's family above, and heard her say:—

"Now, then, Bessie! What be you a-making that racket for? My lady says she'll pull your nose unless you stop at once. My lady's doing her best to teach us to cuss downstairs, and her can't hear her own voice wit'out screeching like a magpie."

Then up rose Lady Lamerton in great agitation.

"That girl is intolerable. She shall not have a ticket for good conduct to-day. I will go—no, you run, Joan Ball, and make her return. I will have a proper school-room built. This shall not occur again."

Then Captain Tubb rose to his full height, stood on a stool, put his mouth to the orifice in the plank, placed his hands about his mouth and roared through the hole: "Her ladyship saith Come down."

Presently with unabashed self-satisfaction Polly Woodley reappeared.

"When I send you on an errand," said Lady Lamerton severely, "deliver it as given. I am much displeased."

"Yes, my lady, thank you," answered Polly with cheerful face, and resumed her seat in class.

"Now, boys," said Captain Tubb to his class, which was

composed of the senior male scholars, including Tom Metters, the rascal who had put the inscriptions in the mouths of Moses and Aaron. "Now, boys, attention. The cradle and Polly Woodley are nothing to you. We will proceed with what we were about."

"Please, sir," said Tom Metters, thrusting forth his hand as a semaphore, "what do Quinquagesima, Septuagesima and the lot of they rummy names mean?"

"Rummy," reproved Captain Tubb, "is an improper term to employ. Say, remarkable. Quinquagesima"—he stroked his moustache, then brightened—"it is the name of a Sunday."

"I know, sir, but why is it so called?"

"Why are *you* called Tom Metters?" asked the captain as a feeble effort to turn the tables.

"I be called Tom after my uncle, and Metters is my father's name—but Quinquagesima?"

"Quin-qua-gess-im-a!" mused the captain, and looked furtively towards my lady for help, but she was engrossed in teaching her class what books were not to be employed for the establishment of doctrine, and did not notice the appeal.

"Yes, sir," persisted Metters, holding him as a ferret holds the throat of a rabbit, "Quinquagesima."

"I think," said Tubb, eagerly, "we were engaged on David's mighty men. Go on with the mighty men."

"But, please sir, I *do* want to know about Quinquagesima, cruel bad."

"Quin-qua-gess-ima," sighed Captain Tubb, nibbling the ends of his beard; then again in a lower sigh, "Quin-qua-gess-ima?" He looked at Arminell for enlightenment, but in vain. She was listening amused and scornful.

"Gessima—gessima!" said Mr. Tubb; then falteringly: "It's a sort of creeper, over veranders."

He saw a flash in Arminell's eye, and took it as encouragement. Then, with confidence, he advanced.

"Yes, Metters, it means that this is the Sunday or week whereabouts the yaller jessamine—or in Latin, gessima—do begin to bloom."

"Thank you, sir—and Septuagesima?"

"That," answered the captain with great promptitude, "that is when the white 'un flowers."

"But, sir, there's another Sunday collick, Sexagesima. There's no red or blue jessamine, be there?"

"Red, or blue!" The teacher looked hopelessly at Arminell, who with compressed lips observed him and shook her head.

"Sex—sex—sex," repeated Mr. Tubb, with his mouth full of beard, "always means females. That means the female jessamine."

"Be there any, sir? There's a petticoat narcissus, and a lady's smock, and a marygold, but I never heard of a she-jessamine."

"There are none here," answered Tubb, "but in the Holy Land—lots."

"Really, Arminell," said Lady Lamerton, "your class is doing nothing but play and disturb mine."

"I am on the stool of the learner," sneered the girl.

At that moment, through the ceiling, or rather boards above, dropped a black-handled kitchen fork within a hair's breadth of Arminell's head. She drew back, startled.

"What is it? What is the matter?" exclaimed Lady Lamerton. "Run up, Polly Woodley!—no, not you this time; you, Fanny White, and see what they are about upstairs."

"Please, my lady," said Polly, peering into the higher regions through the hole, "Bessie have given the baby the knives and forks to play with, 'cause you wont let her rock the cradle and to keep 'un from crying. He's a shoving 'em through the floor."

Then, down through the knot-hole descended a shower

of comfits. The child had been given a cornet by its mother, and had eagerly opened it, over the hole where it had poked the fork.

The school floor was overspread with a pink and white hail-shower. In a moment, all order was over. The classes broke up into individual units, all on the floor, kicking, scratching, elbowing, grabbing after the scattered comfits, thrusting fingers into eyes, into soapy water ; getting them trodden on, nipped between slates, a wriggling, contending, greedy, noisy tangle of small humanity, and above it stood my lady protesting, and Captain Tubb nibbling the ends of his sandy beard, and looking dazed ; and Arminell Inglett, half angry, half amused, altogether contemptuous.

“There !” exclaimed Lady Lamerton, “the bells are going for divine service. In places at once—Let us pray !”

CHAPTER II.

A FOLLOWER.

THE church bells were ringing, the Sunday-school had at last been reduced to order, arranged in line, and wriggled, sinuous, worm-like, along the road and up the avenue to the church porch. Lady Lamerton, brandishing her sunshade as a field-marshal's baton, kept the children in place, and directed the head of the procession.

But with what heart-burnings, what envies, what excited passions did that train sweep on its way. Some of the children had got more comfits than others, and despised those less favoured by luck, and others comfitless envied the more successful. Polly Woodley had secured more comfits than the rest, and had them screwed in the corner of her pocket handkerchief, and she thrust it exultantly under the eyes of Fanny White, who had come off with one only.

Some sobbed because they had crumpled their gowns, one boy howled because in stooping he had ruptured his nether garments, Joan Ball had broken the feather in her hat, and revenged herself on her neighbour by a stab of pin. One child strewed its tongue with comfits, and when Lady Lamerton did not observe, exposed its tongue to the rest of the children to excite their envy. Another was engaged in wiping out of its eyes the soapy water that in the scuffle had been squirted into them.

Captain Tubb dropped away at the church gates to shake

hands with, and talk to, some of the villagers, the inn-keeper to the Lamerton Arms, the churchwarden, the guardian of the poor, and the miller, men who constituted the middle crumb of the parochial loaf.

Lady Lamerton likewise deserted her charges at the porch, and having consigned them to the clerk, returned on her course, entered the drive, and proceeded to meet his lordship, that they might make their solemn entrance into church together. Arminell had disappeared.

"Where is the girl?" asked her ladyship when she took my lord's arm.

"Haven't seen her, my dear."

"Really, Lamerton," said my lady, "she frightens me. She is so impulsive and self-willed. She flares up when opposed, and has no more taste for Sunday-school than I have for oysters. I do my best to influence her for good, but I might as well try to influence a cocoa-nut. By the way, Lamerton, you really must build us a Sunday-school, the inconveniences to which we are subjected are intolerable."

"Have you seen Legassick, my dear?"

"I believe he is standing by the steps."

"I must speak to him about the road, it has been stoned recently. Monstrous! It should have been metalled in the winter, then the stones would have worked in, now they will be loose all the summer to throw down the horses."

"And you will build us a Sunday-school?"

"I will see about it. Won't the keeper's lodge do? The woman does not wash downstairs on a Sunday."

"I wish you kept school there one Sabbath day. You would discover how great are the discomforts. Now we are at the church gates and must compose our minds."

"Certainly, my dear. The lord-lieutenant is going to make Gammon sheriff."

"Why Gammon?"

"Because he can afford to pay for the honour. The old squirearchy can't bear the expense."

"Hush, we are close to the church, and must withdraw our minds from the world."

"So I will, dear. Eggin's pigs have been in the garden again."

"There'll be the exhortation to-day, Lamerton, and you must stand up for it. Next Sunday is Sacrament Sunday."

"To be sure. I'll have a lower line of wire round the fences. Those pigs go where a hare will run."

"Have you brought your hymnal with you?"

Lord Lamerton fumbled in his pocket, and produced his yellow silk kerchief and a book together.

"That," said his wife, "is no good; it is the old edition."

"It doesn't matter. I will open the book, and no one will be the wiser."

"But you will be thinking during the hymn of Eggin's pigs and Gammon's sheriffalty."

"I'll do better next Sunday. The gardener tells me they have turned up your single dahlias."

"Hush! we are in the church. Arminell is not in the pew. Where can she be?"

Arminell was not in church. She was, in fact, walking away from it, and by the time her father had entered his pew and looked into his hat, had put a distance of half a mile between herself and the sacred building. A sudden fit of disgust at the routine of Sunday duties had come over her, and she resolved to absent herself that morning from church, and pay a visit to a deserted lime quarry, where she could spend an hour alone, and her moral and religious sense, as she put it, could recover tone after the ordeal of Sunday-school.

"What can induce my lady to take a class every Sunday?" questioned Arminell, in her thought. "It does no good to the children, and it maddens the teachers. But,

oh ! what a woman mamma is ! Providence must have been hard up for ideas when it produced my lady. How tiresome ! ”

These last words were addressed to a bramble that had caught in her skirt. She shook her gown impatiently and walked on. The bramble still adhered and dragged.

“What a nuisance,” said Arminell, and she whisked her skirt round and endeavoured to pick off the brier, but ineffectually.

“Let me assist you,” said a voice ; and in a moment a young man leaped the park wall, stepped on the end of the bramble, and said, “Now, if you please, walk on, Miss Inglett.”

Arminell took a few steps and was free. She turned, and with a slight bow said, “I thank you, Mr. Saltren.” Then, with a smile, “I wish I could get rid of all tribulations as easily.”

“And find them whilst they cling as light. You are perhaps not aware that ‘tribulation’ derives from the Latin *tribulus*, a bramble.”

“So well aware was I that I perpetrated the joke which you have spoiled by threshing it. Why are you not at church, Mr. Saltren, listening for the rector’s pronounciation of the Greek names of St. Paul’s acquaintances, in the hopes of detecting a false quantity among them ? ”

“Because Giles has a cold, and I stay at my lady’s desire to read the psalms and lessons to him.”

“I wonder whether schooling Giles is as intolerable as taking Sunday class ; if it be, you have my grateful sympathy.”

“Your sympathy, Miss Inglett, will relieve me of many a tribulus which adheres to my robe.”

“Is Giles a stupid boy and troublesome pupil ? ”

“Not at all. My troubles are not connected with my little pupil.”

"Class-taking in that Sunday-school is a sort of mental garrotting," said Arminell. "I wonder whether a teacher always feels as if his brains were being measured for a hat when he is giving instruction."

"Only when there is non-receptivity in the minds of those he teaches, or tries to teach. May I ask if you are going to church, Miss Inglett?"

"I have done the civil by attending the Sunday-school, and the articles disapprove of works of supererogation. I am going to worship under the fresh green leaves, and to listen to the choir of the birds—blackbird, thrush and ouzel. I am too ruffled in temper to sit still in church and listen to the same common-places in the same see-saw voice from the pulpit. Do you know what it is to be restless, Mr. Saltren, and not know what makes you ill at ease? To desire greatly something, and not know what you long after?"

The young man was walking beside her, a little in the rear, respectfully, not full abreast. He was a pale man with an oval face, dark eyes and long dark lashes, and a slight downy moustache.

"I can in no way conceive that anything can be lacking to Miss Inglett," he said. "She has everything to make life happy, an ideally perfect lot, absolutely deficient in every element that can jar with and disturb tranquillity and happiness."

"You judge only by exterior circumstances. You might say the same of the bird in the egg—it fits it as a glove, it is walled round by a shell against danger, it is warmed by the breast of the parent, why should it be impatient of its coiled-up, comatose condition? Simply because that condition is coiled-up and comatose. Why should the young sponge ever detach itself from the rock on which it first developed by the side of the great absorbent old sponge? It gets enough to eat, it is securely attached by its foot to

the rock ; it is in the oceanic level that suits its existence. Why should it let go all at once and float away, rise to the surface and cling elsewhere ? Because of the monotony of its life of absorption and contraction, and of its sedentary habits. But, there—enough about myself. I did not intend to speak of myself. You have brambles clinging to you. Show me them, that I may put my foot on them and free you.”

“ You know, Miss Inglett, who I am—the son of the captain of the manganese mine, and that his wife is an old lady’s maid from the park. You know that I was a clever boy, and that his lordship most generously interested himself in me, and when it was thought I was consumptive, sent me for a couple of winters to Mentone. You know that he provided for my schooling, and sent me to the University, and then most kindly took me into Orleigh as tutor to your half-brother Giles, till I can resolve to enter the Church, when, no doubt, he will some day give me a living. All that you know. Do not suppose I am insensible to his lordship’s kindness, when I say that all this goodness shown me has sown my soul full of brambles, and made me the most miserable of men.”

“ But how so ? ” Miss Inglett looked at him with unfeigned surprise. “ As you said to me, so say I to you, and excuse the freedom. Mr. Saltren has everything to make life happy, education, comfortable quarters, kind friends, an assured future, an ideally perfect lot, absolutely deficient in disturbing elements.”

“ Now you judge by the outside. I admit to the full that Lord Lamerton has done everything he could think of to do me good, but can one man calculate what will suit another ? Will a bog plant thrive in loam, or a heath in clay ? ”

“ You do not think that what has been done for you is well done ? ”

“ I am not inclined for the Church, I have a positive

distaste for the ministry, and yet Lord Lamerton is bent on my being a parson. If I do not become one, what am I to be? I cannot go back to the life whence I have been taken; I cannot endure to be with those who hold their knives by the middle when eating, and drink their tea out of their saucers, and take their meals in their shirt sleeves. Remember I have been translated from the society to which by birth I belong, to another as different from it as is that of Brahmins from Esquimaux; I cannot accommodate myself again to what was once my native element. Baron Munchausen, in one of his voyages, landed on an island made of cream cheese, and only discovered it by the fainting of a sailor who had a natural antipathy to cream cheese. I have come ashore on an island the substance of which is altogether different from the soil where I was born. I cannot say I have an ineradicable distaste for it, but that at first I found a difficulty in walking on it. The specific gravity of cream cheese is other than that of clay. Now that I have acquired the light and trippant tread that suits, if I return to my native land, my paces will be criticised, and regarded as affected, and myself as supercilious, for not at once plodding from my shoulders like a ploughboy in marl. How was it with poor Persephone who spent half her time in the realm of darkness and half in that of light? She carried to the world of light her groping tentative walk, and was laughed at, and when in Hades, she trod boldly as if in day and got bruises and bloody noses. Even now I am in a state of oscillation between the two spheres, and am at home in neither, miserable in both. When I am in the cream-cheese island I never feel that I can walk with the buoyancy of one born on cream cheese. I can never quite overcome the sense of inhaling an atmosphere of cheese, never quite find the buttermilk squeezed out of it taste like aniseed water."

Arminell could not refrain from a laugh. "Really, Mr. Saltren, you are not complimentary to our island."

"Call it the Isle of Rahat la Koum, Turkish Delight, or Guava Jelly—anything luscious. One who has eaten salt pork and supped vinegar cannot at once tutor his palate to everything saccharine to a syrup."

"But what really troubles you in the Isle of Guava?"

"I am not a native but a stranger. Your tongue is by me acquired. There are even tones and inflexions of voice in you I cannot attain because my vocal organs got set in another world. A man like myself taken up and carried into a different sphere by another hand is inevitably so self-conscious that his self-consciousness is a perpetual torment to him. According to the apocryphal tale, an angel caught Habakkuk by the hair and carried him with a mess of pottage in his hands through the air, and deposited him in Daniel's den of lions. Your father has been my angel, who has taken me up and transported me, and now I am in a den of lordly beasts who stalk round me and wonder how I came among them, and turn up their noses at the bowl I carry in my shaking hands."

"And you want to escape from us lions?"

"Pardon me—I am equally ill at ease elsewhere, I have associated with lions till I can only growl."

"And lash yourself raw," laughed Arminell; "you know a lion has a nail at the end of his tail, wherewith he goads himself."

"I can torture myself—that is true," said Saltren, in a disquieted tone. "My lord will give me a living and provide for me if I will enter the Church, but that is precisely an atmosphere I do not relish—and what am I to do? I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed."

"Mr. Saltren, you are not at ease in the lion's den, but suppose you were to crawl out and get into the fields?"

"I should lose my way, having been carried by the

angel out of my own country. You see the wretchedness of my position, I am uncomfortable wherever I am. In my present situation I imagine slights. Anecdotes told at table make me wince, jokes fret me. Conversation on certain subjects halts because I am present. Yet I cannot revert to my native condition ; that would be deterioration, now I have acquired polish, and have progressed."

"I should not have supposed, Mr. Saltren, that you were so full of trouble."

"No, looking on a rose-pip, all smoothness, you do not reckon on its being full of choke within. And now—Miss Inglett, you see at once an instance of my lack of tact and knowledge. I am in doubt whether I have done well to pour out my pottle of troubles in your ear, or whether I behaved like a booby."

"I invited you to it."

"Precisely, but in the language of the Isle of Guava, words do not mean what they are supposed to mean in the Land of Bacon. I may have transgressed those invisible bounds which you recognise by an instinct of which I am deficient. There are societies which have laws and signs of fellowship known only to the initiated. You belong to one, the great Freemasonry of Aristocratic Culture. You all know one another in it, how—is inconceivable to me, though I watch and puzzle to find the symbol ; and your laws, unwritten, I can only guess at, but you all know them, suck them in with mother's milk. I have been brought up among you, but I have only an idea of your laws, and as for your shibboleth—it escapes me altogether. And now—I do not know whether I have acted rightly or wrongly in telling you how I am situated. I am in terror lest in taking you at your word I may not have grossly offended you, and lest you be now saying in your heart, What an unlicked cub this is ! how ignorant of tact, how lacking in good breeding ! He should have passed off my invitation

with a joke about brambles. He bores me, he is insufferable."

"I assure you—Mr. Saltren——"

"Excuse my interrupting you. It may or may not be so. I daresay I am hypersensitive, over-suspicious."

"And now, Mr. Saltren, I think Giles is waiting for his psalms and lessons."

"You mean—I have offended you."

"Not at all. I am sorry for you, but I think you are—excuse the word—morbidly sensitive."

"You cannot understand me because you have never been in my land. Baron Munchausen says that in the moon the aristocrats when they want to know about the people send their heads among them, but their trunks and hearts remain at home. The heads go everywhere and return with a report of the wants, thoughts and doings of the common people. You are the same. You send your heads to visit us, to enquire about us, to peep at our ways, and search out our goings, but you do not understand us, because you have not been heart and body down to finger-ends and toes among us, and of us—you cannot enter into our necessities and prejudices and gropings. But I see, I bore you. In the tongue of the Isle of Guava you say to me, Giles wants his psalms and lessons. Which being interpreted means, This man is a bramble sticking to my skirts, following, impeding my movements, a drag, a nuisance. I must get rid of him. I wish you a good morning, Miss Inglett; and holy thoughts under the greenwood tree!"

CHAPTER III.

IN THE OWL'S NEST.

ARMINELL INGLETT made the best of her way to the old quarry. She was impatient to be alone, to enjoy the beautiful weather, the spring sights and sounds, to recover the elasticity of spirit of which she had been robbed by the Sunday-school.

But would she recover that elasticity after her conversation with the young tutor? What he had said was true. He was a village lad of humble antecedents who had been taken up by her father because he was intelligent and pleasing, and commended by the schoolmaster, and delicate. Lord and Lady Lamerton were ever ready to do a kindness to a tenant or inhabitant of Orleigh. When any of the latter were sick, they received jellies and soups and the best port wine from the park ; and a deserving child in school received recognition, and a steady youth was sure of a helping hand into a good situation.

More than ordinary favour had been shown to this young man, son of Stephen Saltren, captain of the manganese mine. He had been lifted out of the station in which he had been born, and was promoted to be the instructor of Giles. Arminell had always thought her father's conduct towards him extraordinarily kind, and now her eyes were open to see that it had been a cruel kindness, filling the young man's heart with a bitterness that contended with his gratitude.

It would have been more judicious perhaps had Lord Lamerton sent young Jingles elsewhere.

Jingles, it must be explained, was not the tutor's Christian name. He had been baptized out of compliment to his lordship, Giles Inglett, and Giles Inglett Saltren was his complete name. But in the national school his double Christian name had been condensed, not without a flavour of spite, into Jingles, and at Orleigh he would never be known by any other.

The old lime-quarry lay a mile from the park. It was a picturesque spot, and would have been perfectly beautiful but for the heaps of rubbish thrown out of it which took years to decay, and which till decayed were unsightly. The process had, however, begun. Indeed, as the quarry had been worked for a century prior to its abandonment, a good deal of the "ramp," as such rubbish heaps are locally called, was covered with grass and pines.

Lord Lamerton had done his best to disguise the nakedness by plantations of Scotch-larch and spruce, which took readily to the loose soil, the creeping roots grasped the nodes of stone and crushed them as in a vice, then sucked out of them the nutriment desired; the wild strawberry rioted over the banks, and the blackberry brambles dropped their trailers over the slopes, laden in autumn with luscious fruit, and later, when flowers are scarce, with frost-touched leaves, carmine, primrose, amber and purple.

At the back of the quarry was an old wood, sloping to the south and breaking off sharply at the precipice where the lime rock had been cut away; this was a wood of oaks with an undergrowth of bracken and male fern, and huge hollies. Here and there large venerable Scotch pines rose above the rounded surface of the oak tops, in some places singly, elsewhere in dark clumps.

The rock of the hill was slaty. The strata ran down and made a dip and came to the surface again, and in the lap

lay the lime-stone. When the quarry-men had deserted the old workings, water came in and partly filled it, to the depth of forty feet, with crystalline bottle-green water. Lord Lamerton had put in trout, and the fish grew there to a great size, but were too wary to be caught. The side of the quarry to the south shelved rapidly into the water, and the fisherman standing on the slope with his rode was visible to the trout. They were too cautious to approach, and too well fed with the midges that hovered over the water to care to bite.

The north face of the quarry—that is the face that looked to the sun—was quite precipitous; it rose to the same height above the water that it descended beneath it. Over the edge hung bushes of may that wreathed the gray rocks in spring with snow as of the past winter, and in winter with scarlet berries, reminiscences of the fire of lost summer. Where the may-bushes did not monopolise the top, there the heath and heather hung their wiry branches and grew to brakes, and the whortleberry—the *vaccinium*—formed a fringe of glossy leafage in June and July rich with purple berries, and in autumn dotted with fantastic scarlet, where a capricious leaf had caught a touch of frost that had spared its fellows.

Down a rocky cranny fell a dribbling stream, the drainage of the wood above; in summer it was but a distillation, sufficient to moisten the beds of moss and fern that rankly grew on the hedges beneath it, and in winter never attaining sufficient volume to dislodge the vegetation it nourished.

To the ledges thus moistened choice ferns had retreated as to cities of refuge from the rapacity of collectors, who rive away these delicate creatures regardless what damage is done them, indifferent whether they kill in the process, considering only the packing of them off in hampers for sale or barter, and in many places exterminating the rarest and most graceful ferns; but here, with a gulf of deep water

between themselves and their pursuers, the parsley and maiden-hair ferns throve and tossed their fronds in security and insolence.

It was marvellous to see how plants luxuriated in this old abandoned quarry, how they seized on it, as squatters on no-man's land, and multiplied and grew wanton and revelled there ; how the hart's tongue grew there to enormous size, and remained, unbrowned by frost, throughout the winter ; how the crane's bill bloomed to Christmas, and scented the air around, and the strawberry fruited out of season and reason.

By what fatality did the butterflies come there in such numbers ? Was it that they delighted in dancing over the placid mirror admiring themselves therein ? After a few gyrations they inevitably dipped their wings and were lost ; perhaps they mistook their gay reflections for inviting flowers, or perhaps, like Narcissus, they fell in love with their own likenesses, and, stooping to kiss, were caught.

In summer butterflies were always to be found hovering over or floating on the surface, but they hovered or floated only for a while, presently a ring was formed in the glassy surface, a ring that widened and multiplied itself—the butterfly was gone, and a trout the better for it.

About six feet of soil, in some places more, in others less, appeared in sections above the quarry-edge, that is to say, above the rock. It was quite possible to trace the primitive surface of the pre-historic earth, much indented ; but these indentations had been filled in by accumulations of humus, so that the upper turf was almost of a level.

Where rock ended and soil began, the jackdaws had worked for themselves caves and galleries in which they lived a communal life, and multiplied prodigiously. A pair of hawks bred there as well, spared by express order of Lord Lamerton, but viewed with bitter animosity by the keepers ; also a colony of white owls, all on tolerable terms,

keeping their distances, avoiding social intercourse, very much like the classes among mankind. These owls also would have perished, nailed to the stable doors or the keeper's wall, had not his lordship extended protection to them likewise. The kingfishers in the Ore were becoming fewer, the keepers waged war on them also, because they interfered with the fish. Lord Lamerton did not know this, or he would have held his protecting hand over their amethystine heads.

The cliff was ribbed horizontally, the harder bands of stratification standing forth as shelves on which lodged the crumbling of the more friable beds, and the leaves that sailed down from the autumn trees above. On these ledges a few bushes and a stunted Scotch pine grew. The latter grappled with the rock, holding to it with its red-brown roots like the legs of a gigantic spider.

At the west end, on a level with the topmost shelf of rock, just beneath where the earth buried the surface of rock, was a cave artificially constructed, at the time when the lime was worked, as a refuge for the miners when blasting.

Formerly a path had existed leading to this cave, but now the path was gone—scarce a trace survived. The owls, calculating on the inaccessibility of the grot to man, had taken possession of it, and bred there.

"I am glad I came here," said Arminell. "In this lovely, lonely spot one can worship God better than in a stuffy church, pervaded with the smell of yellow-soap, of clean linen, and the bergamot of oiled heads, and the peppermint the clerk sucks. Here one has the air full of the incense of the woods, the pines exuding resin in the sun, the oak-leaves exhaling their aroma, and the ferns, fragrant with the sea-like stimulating odour. I am weary of that hum-drum which constitutes to mamma the law and aim of life. We may be all—as Jingles says—steeped in syrup,

but it is the syrup of hum-drum that crystallizes about us, after having extracted from us and dismissed all individual flavour, like the candied fruit in a box, where currants, greengage, apricot, pear—all taste alike. We are so saturated with the same syrup that we all lead the same saccharine existences, have the same sweet thoughts, utter the same sugary words, and have not an individualizing smack and aroma among us. Mamma is the very incarnation of routine. She talks to her guests on what she thinks will interest them, got up for the occasion out of magazines and reviews. These magazines save her and the like of her a world of trouble. The aristocrats of the moon, according to Jingles, sent their heads forth in pursuit of knowledge; we have other peculiar heads sent to us stuffed with the forced meat of knowledge, and wrapped in the covers of magazines. So much for my mother. As for my father, he neither takes in nor gives vent to ideas. He presents prizes at schools, opens institutes, attends committees, sits on boards, presides at banquets; occasionally votes, but never speaks in the House; his whole circle of interests is made up of highways, asylums and county bridges. In olden times, witches drew circles and set about them skulls and daggers, toads and braziers, and within these circles wrought necromancy. My father's circle is that of hum-drum, set round with county and parochial institutions, with the sanitary arrangements carefully considered, and without the magic circle he works—nothing.”

She was standing at the west end of the quarry, looking along the edge of the precipice, on her left.

“I wonder,” she mused, “whether it would be feasible to reach the owls.”

Filled with this new ambition, she thought no more of the shortcomings of her father and step-mother.

“It would be possible, by keeping a cool head,” she said.

"I should like to see what an owl's nest is like, and in that cave I can pay my Sunday devotions."

The shelf was not broad enough to allow of any one walking on it unsupported, even with a cool head.

In places, indeed, it broadened, and there lay a cushion of grass, but immediately it narrowed to a mere indication. The distance was not great, from whence Arminell stood, to the cave, some twenty-five feet, and a slip would entail a fall into the water beneath.

As the girl stood considering the possibilities and the difficulties, she noticed that streamers of ivy hung over the edge from the surface of the soil. She could not reach these, however, from where she stood. Were she to lay hold of them, she might be able to sustain herself whilst stepping along the ledge, just as if she were supported by a pendent rope.

"I believe it is contrivable," she said; "I see where the ivy springs at the root of an elder tree. I can find or cut a crooked stick, and thus draw the strands to me. How angry and indignant mamma would be, were she to see what I am about."

She speedily discovered a suitable stick, and with its assistance drew the pendent branches towards her. Then, laying hold of them, she essayed an advance on the shelf. The ivy-ropes were tough, and tenacious in their rooting into the ground. She dragged at them, jerked them, and they did not yield. She grasped them in her left hand, and cautiously stepped forward.

At first she had a ledge of four inches in width to rest her feet on, but the rock, though narrow, was solid, and by leaning her weight well on the ivy, and advancing on the tips of her feet, she succeeded, not without a flutter of heart, in passing to a broad patch of turf, where she was comparatively safe, and where, still clinging to the ivy, she drew a long breath.

The water, looked down on from above, immediately beneath her was blue ; only in the shadows, where it did not reflect the light, was it bottle-green.

There was not a ripple on it. She had not dislodged a stone. She turned her eyes up the bank. She had no fear of the ropes failing her ; they would not be sawn through, because they swung over friable earth, not jagged rock.

"Allons, avançons," said Arminell, with a laugh. She was excited, pleased with herself—she had broken out of the circle of humdrum.

The ledge was wide, where she stood, and she held to the rope to keep her from giddiness, rather than to sustain her weight.

After a few further steps, she paused. The shelf failed altogether for three feet, but beyond the gap was a terrace matted with cistus and ablaze with flower. Arminell's first impulse was to abandon her enterprize as hazardous beyond reason, but her second was to dare the further danger, and make a spring to the firm ground.

"This is the difference between me and my lady," said Arminell. "She—and my lord likewise—will not risk a leap—moral, social, or religious."

Then with a rush of impetuosity and impatience, she swung herself across the gap, and landed safely on the bed of cistus.

"Would Giles ever be permitted the unconventional?" asked Arminell. "What a *petit-maitre* he will turn out."

The Hon. Giles Inglett, her half-brother, aged ten, was, as already said, the only son of Lord Lamerton and heir-apparent to the barony.

From the cistus patch she crept, still clinging to the ivy, along the ledge that now bore indications of the path once formed on it, and presently, with a sense of defiance of danger, allowed herself to look down into the still water.

"After all, if I did go down, it would not be very dread-

ful—it is a reversed heaven. I would spoil my gown, but what of that? I have my allowance, and can spoil as many gowns as I choose within my margin. I wonder—would a fall from my social terrace be as easy as one from this—and lead to such trifling and reparable consequences?”

Then she reached the platform of the cave, let go the ivy-streamers, and entered the grotto.

The entrance was just high enough for Arminell to pass in without stooping. The depth of the cave was not great, ten feet. The sun shone in, making the nook cheerful and warm. Again Arminell looked down at the pond.

“How different the water seems according to the position from which we look at it. Seen from one point it blazes with reflected light, and laughs with brilliance; seen from another it is infinitely sombre, light-absorbing, not light-reflecting. It is so perhaps with the world, and poor Jingles contemplates it from an unhappy point.”

She seated herself on the floor at the mouth of the cave, and leaned her back against the side, dangling one foot over the edge of the precipice.

“The best of churches, the most inspiring shrine for holy thoughts—O how lucky, I have in my pocket Gaboriau’s ‘Gilded Clique!’”

She wore a pretty pink dress with dark crimson velvet trimmings, but the brightest point of colour about Arminell was the blood-coloured cover of the English version of the French romance of rascality and crime.

Arminell had lost her mother at an age at which she could not remember her. The girl had been badly brought up, by governesses unequal to the task of forming the mind and directing the conscience of a self-willed intelligent girl.

She had changed her governesses often, and not invariably for the better. One indulged and flattered her, and set her cap at Lord Lamerton. She had to be dismissed. Then came a methodical creature, eminently conscientious,

so completely a piece of animated clockwork, so incapable of acting or even thinking out of a set routine, that she drove Arminell into sullen revolt. After her departure, a young lady from Girton arrived, who walked with long strides, wore a pince-nez, was primed with slang, and held her nose on high to keep her pince-nez in place. She was dismissed because she whistled, but not before her influence, the most mischievous of all, had left its abiding impress on the character of the pupil.

This governess laughed at conventionalities, such as are the safeguards of social life, and sneered at the pruderies of feminine modesty. Her tone was sarcastic and sceptical.

Then came a lady of good manners, but of an infinitely feeble mind, who wore a large fringe to conceal a forehead as retreating as that of the Neanderthal man. Arminell found her a person of infinite promise and no achievement. She undertook to teach Greek, algebra, and comparative anatomy, but could not spell "rhododendron."

When Lord Lamerton had married again, the new wife shrank from exercising authority over the wayward girl, and sought to draw her to her by kindness. But Arminell speedily gauged the abilities of her step-mother, and became not actively hostile, but indifferent to her. Lady Lamerton was not a person to provoke hostility.

Thus the girl had grown up with mind unformed, judgment undisciplined, feelings impetuous and under no constraint, and with very confused notions of right and wrong. She possessed by nature a strong will, and this had been toughened by resistance where it should have been yielded to, and non-resistance where it ought to have been firmly opposed.

She had taken a class that Sunday in the school, as well as on the preceding Sunday, only at Lady Lamerton's urgent request, because the school-mistress was absent on a holiday.

And now Arminell, who had come to the Owl's Nest to pay her devotions to heaven, performed them by reading Gaboriau's "Gilded Clique."

CHAPTER IV.

A PRAYER-RAFT.

How long Arminell had been resting in her sunny nook above the water, reading the record of luxury, misery and vice, she did not know, for she became engrossed in the repulsive yet interesting tale, and the time slipped away, unperceived.

She was roused from her reading by the thought that suddenly occurred to her, quite unconnected with the story, that she had let go the strands of ivy when she reached the cave,—and in a moment her interest in the “Gilded Clique” ceased and she became alarmed about her own situation. In her delight at attaining the object of her ambition, she had cast aside the streamers without a thought that she might need them again, and they had reverted to their original position, beyond her reach. She could not venture along the strip of turf without their support, and she had not the crook with her, wherewith to rake them back within reach of her hand.

What was to be done? The charm of the situation was gone. Its novelty had ceased to please. Her elation at her audacity in venturing on the “path perilous” had subsided. To escape unassisted was impossible, and to call for assistance useless in a place so rarely visited.

“It does not much matter,” said Arminell; “I shall not have to spend a night among the owls. My lady when she misses me will send out a search-party, and Jingles will

direct them whither to go for me. I will return to my book."

But Arminell could not recover her interest in the story of the "Gilded Clique." She was annoyed at her lack of prudence, for it had not only subjected her to imprisonment, but had placed her in a position somewhat ridiculous. She threw down the book impatiently and bit her lips.

"This is a lesson to me," she said, "not to make rash excursions into unknown regions without retaining a clue which will enable me to retrace my steps to the known. Cæsar may have been a hero when he burnt his ships, but his heroism was next akin to folly."

She sat with her hands in her lap, with a clouded face, musing on the chance of her speedy release. Then she laughed, "Like Jingles, I am in a wrong position, but unlike him, I am here by my own foolhardiness. He was carried by my lord into the eagle's nest; like Sinbad, out of the valley of diamonds. But in the valley of diamonds there were likewise serpents. My lord swooped down on poor Jingles, caught him up, and deposited him in his nest on the heights for the young eagles to pull to pieces."

As she was amusing herself with this fancy, she observed a man by the waterside at the east or further end of the quarry, engaged in launching a primitive raft which he drew out of a bed of alder. The raft consisted of a couple of hurdles lashed together, on which an old pig-sty or stable door was laid. Upon this platform the man stationed himself when the raft was adrift, and with a long oar sculled himself into the middle of the pond.

What was his object? Had he seen Arminell and was he coming to her assistance, concluding that she could be rescued in no other fashion? On further observation Arminell convinced herself that he had not seen her and knew nothing of her predicament and distress.

What was he about to do? To fish?

No—not to fish.

When the raft floated in the middle of the tarn, the man laid down his oar, knelt on the board and began to pray.

“Why—!” exclaimed the girl; “that is Captain Saltren, Jingles’ father.”

Captain Stephen Saltren, master of the manganese mine, was a tall man, rather gaunt and thin, and loosely compacted at the joints, with dark hair, high cheek-bones and large, deeply-sunken eyes. His features were irregular and ill cut—yet it was impossible to look at his face without being impressed with the thought that he was no ordinary man. His hands, though roughened and enlarged by work, had long fingers, the indication of a nervous temperament. He had, moreover, one of those flexible voices which go far towards making a man an orator. He was unaware of the value of his organ, he was devoid of skill in using it; but it was an impressive voice when used in times of deep emotion, thrilling those who heard it and sweeping them into sympathy with the speaker. His eyes were those of a mystic, looking into a far-off sphere, esteeming the world of sense as a veil, a painted film, disturbing, impeding distinct vision of the sole realities that existed in the world beyond.

There was velvety softness in his dark eyes, and gentleness in his flexible mouth, and yet the least observant person speaking with him could see that fire was ready to leap out of those soft eyes on provocation, and that the mouth could set with rigid determination when his prejudices were touched.

The forehead of the man was of unusual height. He had become partly bald, had shed some of the hair above the brow, and this had given loftiness to his forehead. There were hollows between his temples and eye-brows; his head was lumpy and narrow. Altogether it was an ill-balanced, but an interesting head.

The mystic, who at one time was a prominent feature in religious life, has almost disappeared from among us, gone utterly out of the cultured classes, gone from among the practical mercantile classes, going little by little from the lower beds of life, not expelled by education but by the materialism that penetrates every realm of human existence. In time the mystic will have become as extinct as the dodo, the great auk, and the Caleb Balderstones. But there are mystics still—especially when there is a strain of Celtic blood, and of this class of beings was Stephen Saltren.

The captain was in trouble, and whenever he was in trouble or unhappy he had recourse to prayer, and he prayed with most disengagement on his raft. He came to the quarry when his mind was disturbed and his heart agitated, thrust himself out from land, and prayed where he believed himself to be unobserved and unlikely to be interrupted.

The cause of his unrest on this occasion was the threat Lord Lamerton had uttered of closing the manganese mine. This mine had its adit, crushing mill and washing floors at but a short distance from the great house. About fifteen years previous, a mine had been worked on the estate that yielded so richly, that with the profits, Lord Lamerton had been able to clear off some mortgages. That lode was worked out. It had been altogether an extraordinary one, bunching, as it is termed, into a great mass of solid manganese, but this bunch, when worked out, ended without a trace of continuance. Then, as Lord Lamerton was assured, another came to the surface in the hill behind the mansion, and as he was in want of money, he reluctantly permitted the mine to be opened within a rifle shot of his house. The workings were out of sight, hidden by a plantation, and manganese mines make no great heaps of unsightly deposit; nevertheless, the mine was inconveniently near the place. It did not yield as it

had promised, or as the experts had pretended it promised, and Lord Lamerton had lost all hope of making money by it. The vein was followed, but it never "bunched." Foreign competition affected the market, English manganese was under-sold, and Wheal Perseverance, as the mine was called, did not pay for the "working." Lord Lamerton annually lost money on it. Then he was informed that the lode ran under Orleigh gardens, and promised freely to "bunch" under the mansion. That is to say, he was asked to allow his house to be undermined. This decided his lordship, and he announced that the mine must be abandoned. Bunch or no bunch, he was not going to have his old place tunnelled under and brought about his ears, on the chance—the chimerical chance—of a few thousand pounds' worth of metal being extracted from the rock on which it stood.

To Lord Lamerton his determination seemed right and reasonable. The land was his. The royalties were his; the house was his. Every man may do what he will with his own. If he has a penny in his pocket, he is at liberty to spend or to hoard it as he deems best.

But this decision of his lordship threatened ruin or something like ruin to a good many men who had lived on the mine, to families whereof the father worked underground, and the children above washing ore on the floors. The cessation of the mining would throw all these out of employ. It was known to the miners that manganese mines were everywhere unprofitable, and were being abandoned. Where then should they look for employment?

It was open to bachelors to migrate to America, but what were the married men to do? The captain would feel the stoppage of the mine most of all. He had kept the accounts of the output, had paid the wages, and sold the metal. The miners might, indeed, take temporary work on the new line in course of construction, but that meant a

change of life from one that was regular, whilst living in settled homes, to a wandering existence, to makeshift housing, separation from their families, and to association with demoralising and lawless companions. The captain, however, had not this chance within reach. He could not migrate, because he possessed the little house in which he lived, together with an acre of garden ground beside it, which his father had enclosed and reclaimed. Moreover, he was not likely to find work which gave him a situation of authority and superiority. Instead of being a master he must be content—if he found employ—to work as a servant. Hitherto, he had engaged and dismissed the hands, now he must become a hand—and be glad to be one—liable to dismissal.

It was natural that the men, and especially Saltren, should feel keenly and resent the closing of the mine. People see things as they affect themselves, and appreciate them only as they relate to their own affairs. I knew a man named Balhatchet who patented a quack medicine which he called his Heal-all, and this man never could be brought to see that the Fall of Man was a disaster to humanity, for, he argued, if there had been no fall, then no sickness, and therefore no place for Balhatchet's Heal-all.

According to "The Spectator," when the news reached London that the King of France was dead, "Now we shall have fish cheaper," was the greeting the tidings evoked. The miners were angry with the bleachers, because they used German manganese instead of that raised in England, and angry with the shippers for bringing it across the sea. But above all, at this time, they were inclined to resent the action of Lord Lamerton in closing the mine, for by so doing he was, as they put it, snatching the bread out of their hungry mouths, whilst himself eating cake. They did not believe that undermining the great house would disturb its foundations. That was a mere excuse.

How could his lordship be sure that undermining would crack his walls till he had tried it? And—supposing they did settle, what of that? They might be rebuilt. The men had been told that his lordship had painted the north wall with impenetrable, anti-damp preparation, because on that side of the house the paper in the rooms became mildewed. If there was damp, what better means of drying the house than undermining it? Why should his lordship send many pounds to London for damp-excluding paint, when by spending the money in Orleigh he might so drain the soil through a level under the foundations that no moisture could possibly rise?

Lord Lamerton had made a great deal of money out of the first mine. He had provided good cottages for his tenants, the workmen, but so much the worse if they were to be turned out of them.

The mine had been christened Wheal Perseverance, and what does perseverance mean, but going on with what is begun? If his lordship had not intended to carry on the mine indefinitely, he should not have called it Wheal Perseverance. When he gave it that name he as much as promised to keep it going always, and to stop it now was a breach of faith. Was it endurable that Lord Lamerton should close the mine? Who had put the manganese in the rock? Was it Lord Lamerton? What had the metal been run there for but for the good of mankind, that it might be extracted and utilized? God had carried the lode under Orleigh Park before a Lamerton was thought of. Was it justifiable that one man, through his aristocratic selfishness, should interfere with the public good, should contravene the arrangements of the Creator? In the gospel the man who hid his talent was held up to condemnation, but here was a nobleman who sat down upon the talent belonging to a score of hard-working and necessitous men, desirous of extracting it, and refused to permit them

to do what God had commanded. Was there not a fable about a dog in the manger? Was not his lordship a very dog in a manger, neither using the manganese himself, nor allowing those who desired to dig it out to put a pick into the ground and disturb it? Maybe there was a "bunch" under the state drawing-room large enough to support a score of families for three years, the men in meat and broadcloth, the women in velvets and jockey-club essence. Lord Lamerton and Lady Lamerton begrudged them these necessities of life. The laws of the land, no doubt, were on the side of the nobleman, but the law of God on that of the labourer. The laws were imposed on the people by a House of Lords and the Queen, and therefore they would agitate for the abolition of an hereditary aristocracy and keep their hats on when next the National Anthem was played.

There were more mixed up in the matter than his lordship. Lord Lamerton did nothing without consulting the agent, Mr. Macduff. The abandonment of the mine was Macduff's doing. The reason was known to every one—Macduff was under the control of his wife. Mrs. Macduff was offended because the school children did not curtsy and touch their caps when she drove through the village in her victoria.

The rector also had a finger in this particular pie. He bore a spite against Captain Saltren, because the captain was not a churchman. Not a word had been said about stopping the lime-quarry. Oh no! of course not, for Captain Tubb taught in the Sunday-school. If Stephen Saltren had taken a class, nothing would have been said about discontinuing the mine. Therefore the miners resolved to join the Liberation Society and make an outcry for the disestablishment of the Church.

So the men argued—we will not say reasoned, and that is no caricature of their arguments, not reasonings, in similar

cases. The uneducated man is always a suspicious man. He never believes in the reasons alleged, these are disguises to hide the true springs of action.

When his lordship was told how incensed the miners were, he made light of the matter. Pshaw ! fiddlesticks ! He was not going to have his dear old Elizabethan home in which he was born, and which had belonged to the Ingletts before they were peers, tumbled about his ears like a pack of cards, just because there was a chance of finding three ha'porth of manganese under it. The mine had been a nuisance for some years. The standing up to their knees in water had been injurious to the health of the girls, many of whom had died of decline. Wheal Perseverance was a bad school of morals, lads and lasses worked together there, and necessarily in a semi-nude condition. The school-master and the Government Inspector had complained that the attendance at school was bad and irregular, for the children could earn money on the washing floors, and did not see the fun of sitting at desks earning nothing.

The miners had been a constant source of annoyance, they were all of them poachers, and had occasional fights with the keepers. The presence of the miners entailed the retention of extra keepers to protect the game, so that in this way also the mine proved expensive. Besides, the manganese dirtied the stream that flowed through the grounds, made it of a hideous tawny red colour, and spoiled the fishing not only in it, but in the river Ore, into which it discharged its turbid waters.

The miners were all radicals and dissenters, and he would be glad to be rid of them.

So every question has its two sides, equally plausible.

Stephen Saltren had been from boyhood shy, silent and self-contained. His only book of study was the Bible, and his imagination was fired by its poetry and its apocalyptic visions. His thoughts were cast in Scriptural forms ; his

early companions had nick-named him the Methodist Parson. But Saltren had never permanently attached himself to any denomination. The Church was too ceremonious, he turned from her in dislike. He rambled from sect to sect seeking a dwelling-place, and finding only a temporary lodging. For a while he was all enthusiasm, and flowed with grace, then the source of unction ran dry, and he attributed the failure to deficiencies in the community he had joined, left it to recommence the same round of experiences and encounter the same disappointments in another. As a young man he had worked with his father at the original mine, Wheal Eldorado, and on his father's death, had continued to live in the house his father had built on land he had appropriated. He continued to work at Eldorado, became captain in his father's room, and when Eldorado was exhausted, directed the works of Wheal Perseverance. Every one spoke highly of Stephen Saltren, as a steady, conscientious man, truthful and of unimpeachable honesty. But no one quite understood Saltren, he made no friends, he sought none; and he left on all with whom he came in contact, the impression that he was a man of very abnormal character.

Whilst Adam slept, the help-mate was formed and set by him. When he opened his eyes, it was with a start and with something like terror that he saw Eve at his side. He could not but believe he was still a prey to dreams. Ever since the first meeting love has come as a surprise on the sons of Adam, has come on them when least prepared to resist its advance, and has never been regarded in the first moment as a grave reality.

Thousands of years have rolled their course, and love has remained unchanged, like the rose and the nightingale, neither developing forward to some higher form of activity, nor degenerating to one less generous.

The diseases pass through endless modifications, varying

in phenomena with every generation, changing their symptoms, disguising their nature, but the fever of love is always one and runs the identical course. Enthusiasts have sought to stifle it in hair-cloth, and reduce its virulence by vaccination with foreign matter, but it resists every effort to subdue it. Society has attempted to discipline it and turn it to practical ends. But love is a fire which will consume all bonds and snap them, and is only finally extinguished with a handful of clay, when the breast in which it has burnt is reduced, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust.

Unexpectedly, unaccountably, the fever laid hold of Stephen Saltren. He lost his heart to Marianne Welsh, who had been servant at the park, a handsome girl, with refinement of manner beyond her class.

He courted her for a month. She had left the great house for some unexplained reason; some folks said she was a liar, and had been dismissed because found out to be unreliable; others said she left because she was so good-looking that the rest of the maids were jealous of her and worried her out of her situation.

Whilst courting Marianne, Saltren was a charmed man. His vision of the spiritual world became clouded, and he was not sensible of the loss. A new world of unutterable delight, and of ideal beauty, clothed in rainbow colours and bathed in brilliant light, had unfurled before him and now occupied his perspective.

The acquaintanceship led at once to marriage. There was no delay. There was no occasion for delay. Saltren possessed his own house and land, and was in receipt of a good salary. The marriage ensued; and then another change came over Saltren. The new world of love and beauty, so real, faded as the mirage of the desert, disclosing desert and dead bones.

Seven months after the marriage, Marianne became the

mother of a boy, and only Stephen knew that the son was not his own. A cruel act of treachery had been committed. Marianne had taken his name, not because she loved him, but to hide her own dishonour.

When he knew how he had been deceived, a barb entered Stephen's heart, and he was never after free from its rankle. A fire was kindled in his veins that smouldered and gnawed its way outwards, certain eventually to flare forth in some sudden and unexpected outbreak. He became more reserved, more dreamy, more fantastic than before his marriage, and more of an enigma to those with whom he associated.

"Let the babe be christened Giles Inglett," said Marianne, "that has a distinguished sound, none of your vulgar Jacks, and Harrys, and Bills—besides, it will be taken as a compliment at the park, and may be of benefit to the little fellow afterwards."

Saltren shrugged his shoulders.

"It is your child, call it what you will."

The boy was brought up by Stephen as his son, none doubted the paternity. But Saltren never kissed the infant, never showed the child love, took no interest in the welfare of the youth. To his wife he was cold, stern and formal. He allowed her to see that he could never forgive the wrong that had been done him.

So much for the past of Captain Stephen Saltren. Now, on this spring Sunday morning, Arminell Inglett watched the man at his devotions on the raft. She allowed him to proceed with them undisturbed for some time; but she could not spend the whole day in the owl's nest. Saltren must be roused from his spiritual exercises and raptures. He must assist her—he must surely have ropes at his disposal, and could call men to help in her release.

She called him by name.

Her call was re-echoed from the rocky walls of the

quarry. Saltren looked up, looked about, and remained expectant, with uplifted hands and eyes.

Then, half impatiently, half angrily, Arminell flung the crimson covered novel of Gaboriau far out into the air, to fall on or near Saltren, in the hopes of directing his attention to her position.

He saw the fluttering book in the air, and stretched forth his hands to receive it. The book whirled about, expanded, turned over, shut, and shot down into the pond, where it floated one moment with its red cover upwards. Captain Saltren was engrossed in interest to see and to secure the book ; he sculled towards it, stooped over the water to grasp it, lost balance, and fell forward, and in his effort to recover the volume and save himself from immersion, touched it, and the book went under the raft and disappeared.

The attempt to attract attention to herself had failed, and Arminell uttered an exclamation of vexation.

CHAPTER V.

INFECTION.

A TOUCH on Arminell's shoulder made her turn with a start. She saw behind her an old woman who had approached along the ledge, unobserved, supporting herself by the strands of ivy in the same manner as herself. Arminell had been standing leaning against the rock, her eyes and attention occupied with Captain Saltren, and so had not noticed the stealthy progress of the woman.

"See here, miss," said the new arrival, "I have come to help you in the proper way. Lord love y' what's the good o' calling to that half mazed man there? By the road you came, by that you must return. Here be ivy bands enough for both. Take half yourself and follow me, or if you'd rather, go on before. Don't look at your feet, look ahead."

"Who are you?" asked Arminell in surprise.

"Won't you accept help till you know who she is that offers it?" asked the woman with a laugh. "Do you object to lean on a stick till you know the name of the tree whence it was cut? I'm not ashamed of what I'm called, I'm Patience Kite, that lives in the thatched cottage under the wood at the end of the quarry. I saw how you came to this place, and how you have thrown your book at the captain, because he looked every way but the right one when he was called. There's perversity in all things, miss, as you'll discover when you're a bit older. Them as we call

to come to us don't look our way, and them as we ain't thinking about offer us the helping hand."

Arminell took the proffered ivy ropes, and began to retrace her steps along the face of the precipice, but was unable, whilst so doing, to resist the temptation to look and see if Captain Saltren had as yet observed her, but she saw that he was still diving his arms into the water after the sunken volume, and was unconscious that any one watched him.

"Hold to my gown, it is coarse, but the better to stay you with," said the woman. "Do not look round, keep fast with the right hand to the ivy, and clutch me with your left. What a comical bringing together of them whom God has put asunder that would be if you and I were to be found in death grappled together in the quarry pond!"

Slowly, cautiously, Arminell followed her guide and finally reached the firm bank.

"Now then," said Patience, "you can come and rest in my cottage. It is hard by. I'll wipe a chair for you. As you wanted to see the owl's nest, perhaps you mayn't object to visit the house of the white witch."

Arminell hesitated. She was inclined to return home, but felt that it would seem ungracious to decline the offer of the woman who had assisted her out of her difficulties.

"Look yonder," mocked Patience, pointing to the water, "the captain is at his prayers again. I wonder, now, what he took that book to be you throwed at him, and your voice to be that called him? He'll make a maze o' queer fancies out of all, I reckon."

"Does Mr. Saltren often come here?"

"When the shoe pinches."

"I do not understand you, Mrs. Kite."

"No, I'll be bound you do not. How can you understand the pinching and pain o' others, when you've never felt pinch or pain yourself? Such as lie a-bed in swans'

down wonder what keeps them awake that couches on nettles."

"But what has this to do with Captain Saltren and his prayers?"

"Everything," answered the woman; "you don't ask for apples when your lap is full. Those that suffer and are in need open their mouths. But whether aught comes to them for opening their mouths is another matter. The cuckoo in my clock called, and as none answered, he gave it up—so did I."

There was a savagery in the woman's tone that startled Arminell, and withal a strangeness in her manner that attracted her curiosity.

"I will go with you to the cottage for a moment," she said.

"This is the way," answered Patience, leading through the brake of fern under the oaks.

Patience Kite was a tall woman, with black hair just turning grey, a wrinkled face, and a pointed chin. She had lost most of her teeth, and mouthed her words, but spoke distinctly. Her nose was like the beak of a hawk; her eyes were grey and wild under heavy dark brows. When she spoke to Arminell she curtsied, and the curtsy of the gaunt creature was grotesque. The girl could not read whether it were intended as respectful, or done in mockery. Her dress was tidy, but of the poorest materials, much patched. She wore no cap; her abundant hair was heaped on her head, but was less tidy than her clothing; it was scattered about her face and shoulders.

Her cottage was close at hand, very small, built of quarry-stone that corroded rapidly with exposure—the air reduced it to black dust. The chimney threatened to fall; it was gnawed into on the south-west side like a bit of mice-eaten cheese. The thatch was rotten, the rafters were exposed and decayed. The walls, bulged out by the thrust of the

bedroom floor-joists, were full of rents and out of the perpendicular.

The place looked so ruinous, so unsafe, that Arminell hesitated to enter.

The door had fallen, because the frame had rotted away. Patience led her guest over it into the room. There every thing was tidy and clean. Tidiness and cleanliness were strangely combined with ruin and decay. In the window was a raven in a cage.

"This house is dangerous to live in," said Arminell. "Does Mr. Macduff not see that repairs are done? It is unfit for human habitation."

"Macduff!" scoffed Mrs. Kite. "Do y' think that this house belongs to his Lordship? It is mine, and because it is mine, they cannot force me to leave it, and to go into the workhouse."

"But you are in peril of your life here; the chimney might fall and bury you any windy night. The roof might crash in."

"So the sanitary officer says. He has condemned the house."

"Then you are leaving?"

"No. He has done his duty. But I am not going to turn out."

"Yet surely, Mrs. Kite, if the place is dangerous you will not be allowed to remain?"

"Who can interfere with me? The board of guardians have applied to the petty sessions for an order, and it has been granted and served on me."

"Then, of course, you go?"

"No; they can order me to go, but they cannot force me to go. The policeman says they can fine me ten shillings a day if I remain and defy them. Let them fine me. They must next get an order to distrain to get the amount. They may sell my furniture, but they won't be able to turn me out."

"But why remain in peril of your life? You will be crushed under the ruins some stormy night."

"Why remain here? Because I've nowhere else to go to. I will not go into the union, and I will not live in a house with other folk. I am accustomed to be alone. I am not afraid. Here I am at liberty, and I will here die rather than lose my freedom."

"You cannot even shut your door."

"I do not need to. I fear nothing, not the sanitary officer; he can do nothing. Not the board of guardians; they can do nothing. Not the magistrates; they cannot touch me."¹

"Have you anything to live on?"

"I pick up a trifle. I bless bad knees and stop the flow of blood, and show where stolen goods are hidden, and tell who has ill-wished any one."

"You receive contributions from the superstitious."

"I get my living my own way. There is room for all in the world."

Arminell seated herself in a chair offered her, and looked at the raven in its cage, picking at the bars.

Silence ensued for a few minutes. Patience folded her bare brown arms across her bosom, and standing opposite the girl, studied her from head to foot.

"The Honourable Miss Inglett!" she said, and laughed. "Why are you the honourable, and I the common person? Why are you a lady, at ease, well-dressed, and I a poor old

¹ The reader may think this an impossible case. At the present moment an old woman in the author's immediate neighbourhood is thus defying all the authorities. They have come to a dead lock. She has resisted orders to leave for three years, and is in hourly peril of her life. The only person who could expel her is the landlord, who happens to be poor, and who says that he cannot rebuild the cottage; the woman who has it on a lease is bound to deliver it over at the end of the time in good order, but she is without the means to put the cottage in order. Next equinoctial gale may see her crushed to death.

creature badgered by sanitary officers and board of guardians, and magistrates, and by my lord, the chairman at the petty sessions?"

Arminell looked wonderingly at her, surprised at her strange address.

"Because the world is governed by injustice. What had you done as a babe, that you should have the gold spoon put into your mouth, and why had I the pewter one? It is not only sanitary officers and guardians of the poor against me, bullying me, a poor lone widow. Heaven above has been dead set against me from the moment I was born. I've seen the miners truck out ore and cable; now a truck-load of metal, then one of refuse; one to be refined, the other to be rejected. It is so in life; we are run out of the dark mines of nothingness into light, and some of us are all preciousness and some all dross. But do you know this, Miss Arminell, they turned out heaps on heaps of refuse from the copper mines, and now they have abandoned the copper to work the refuse heaps? They find them rich—in what do you suppose? In arsenic."

"You have had much trouble in your life?" asked Arminell, not knowing what to say to this strange, bitter woman.

"Much trouble!" Patience curtsied. She unlaced her arms, and used her hands as she spoke, like a French-woman. She lacked the words that would express her thoughts and enforced and supplemented them with gesture. "Much trouble! You shall hear how I have been served. My father worked in this old lime quarry till it was abandoned, and when it stopped, then he was out of work for two months, and he went out poaching, and shot himself instead of a pheasant. He was not used to a gun. 'Twasn't the fault of the gun. The gun was good enough. When he was brought home dead, my mother went into one fainting fit after another, and I was born; but she died."

"The quarry was given up, I suppose, because it was worked out?" said Arminell.

"Why did Providence allow it to be worked out so soon? Why wasn't the lime made to run ten feet deeper, three feet, one foot would have done it to keep my father alive over my birth, and so saved my mother's life and made me a happy woman?"

"And when your poor mother died?"

"Then it was bad for poor me. I was left an orphan child and was brought up by my uncle, who was a local preacher. He wasn't over-pleased at being saddled wi' me to keep. He served me bad, and didn't give me enough to eat. Once he gave me a cruel beating because I wouldn't say, 'Forgive us our trespasses,' for, said I, 'Heaven has trespassed against me, not I against Heaven.' Why was there not another foot or eighteen inches more lime created when it was made, so that my father and mother might have lived, and I had a home and not been given over to uncle? What I said then, I say now"—all Patience's fierceness rushed into her eyes. "Answer me Have I been fairly used?" She extended her arms, and held her hands open, appealing to Arminell for her judgment.

"And then?" asked the girl, after a long silence, during which nothing was heard but the pecking of the raven at the bars.

"And then my uncle bade me unsay my words, but I would not. Then he swore he would thrash me every day till I asked forgiveness. So it came about."

"What came about?"

"That I was sent to prison."

"Not for profanity! for what?"

"For setting fire to his house."

"You——?"

"Yes, finish the question. Yes, I did; and so I was sent to prison."

Arminell involuntarily shrank from the woman.

"Ah! I frighten you. But the blame does not attach to me. Why were there not a few inches more lime created when the quarry was ordained? Providence means, I am told, fore-seeing. When the world was made I reckon it was foreseen that for lack of a little more lime my father would shoot himself, and the shock kill my mother, and cast me without parents on the hands of a hard uncle, who treated me so bad that I was forced to set his thatch in a blaze, and so was sent to prison. Providence saw all that in the far-off, and held hands and did not lay another handful of lime."

"Have you ever been married?" asked Arminell, startled by the defiance, the rage and revolt in the woman's heart. She asked the question without consideration, in the hope of diverting the thoughts of Mrs. Kite into another channel.

Patience was silent for a moment, and looked loweringly at the young lady, then answered abruptly, "No—a few inches of lime short stopped that."

"How did that prevent your marriage? The quarry was stopped before you were born."

"Right, and because stopped, my father was shot and I became an orphan, and was took by my uncle, and fired his house, and was sent to gaol. After that no man cared to take to wife a woman who put lighted sticks among the thatch. No respectable man would share his name with one who had been in prison. But I was a handsome girl in my day—and—but there—I will tell you no more. The stopping of the quarry did it. If there had been laid at bottom a few inches more of lime rock, it would never have happened. Where lies the blame?"

"Another quarry was opened," said Arminell, "that where Mr. Tubb is captain."

"True," answered Patience; "but between the closing

of one and the opening of another, my father bought a gun, and went over a hedge with it on a moonlight night, and the trigger caught."

Arminell rose.

"I have been here for some time," she said, "and I ought to be on my way home. You will permit me"—she felt in her pocket for her purse.

"No," said Patience curtly. "You have paid me for what I did by listening to my story. But stay—Have you heard that if you go to a pixy mound, and take the soil thereof and put it on your head, you can see the little people, and hear their voices, and know all they say and do. You have come here—to this heap of ruin and wretchedness," she stooped and gathered up some of the dust off the floor and ashes from the hearth, and threw them on the head of Arminell. "I am a witch, they say. It is well; now your eyes and ears are opened to see and know and feel with those you never knew of before this day—another kind of creatures to yourself—the poor, the wretched, the lonely."

CHAPTER VI,

CHILLACOT.

ARMINELL INGLETT walked musingly from the cottage of Patience Kite. The vehemence of the woman, the sad picture she had unfolded of a blighted life, the look she had been given into a heart in revolt against the Divine government of the world, united to impress and disturb Arminell.

Questions presented themselves to her which she had never considered before. Why were the ways of Heaven unequal? Why, if God created all men of one flesh, and breathed into all a common spirit, why were they differently equipped for life's journey? Why were some sent to encounter the freezing blast in utter nakedness, and others muffled in eider-down? The Norns who spin the threads of men's lives, spin some of silk and others of tow. The Parcæ who shovel the lots of men out of bushels of gold, dust, and soot, give to some soot only; they do not trouble themselves to mix the ingredients before allotting them.

As Arminell walked on, revolving in her mind the perplexing question which has ever remained unsolved and continues to puzzle and drive to despair those in all ages who consider it, she came before the house of Captain Saltren.

The house lay in a narrow glen, so narrow that it was lighted and warmed by very little sun. A slaty rock rose above it, and almost projected over it. This rock, called

the Cleve, was crowned with heather, and ivy scrambled up it from below. A brook brawled down the glen below the house.

The coombe had been wild and disregarded, a jungle of furze and bramble, till Saltren's father settled in it, and no man objecting, enclosed part of the waste, built a house, and called it his own. Lord Lamerton owned the manor, and might have interfered, or claimed ground-rent, but in a former generation much careless good-nature existed among landlords, and squatters were suffered to seize on and appropriate land that was regarded of trifling value. The former Lord Lamerton perhaps knew nothing of the appropriation. His agent was an old, gouty, easy-going man who looked into no matters closely, and so the Saltrens became possessed of Chillacot without having any title to show for it. By the same process Patience Kite's father had obtained his cottage, and Patience held her house on the same tenure as Saltren held Chillacot. Usually when settlers enclosed land and built houses, they were charged a trifling ground-rent, and they held their houses and fields for a term of years or for lives, and the holders were bound to keep the dwellings in good repair. But, practically, such houses are not kept up, and when the leases expire, or the lives fall in the houses fall in also. A landlord with such dwellings and tenements on his property is often glad to buy out the holders to terminate the disgrace to the place of having in it so many dilapidated and squalid habitations.

Saltren's house was not in a dilapidated condition; on the contrary, it was neat and in excellent repair. Stephen drew a respectable salary as captain of the manganese mine and could afford to spend money on the little property of which he was proud. He had had the house recently re-roofed with slate instead of thatch, with which it had been formerly covered. The windows and doors had been

originally made of home-grown deal, not thoroughly mature, and it had rotted. Saltren renewed the wood-work throughout. Moreover, the chimney having been erected of the same stone as that of Kite's cottage, had decayed in the same manner. Saltren had it taken down and rebuilt in brick, which came expensive, as brick had to be carted from fourteen miles off. But, as the captain said, one does not mind spending money on a job designed to be permanent. Saltren had restocked his garden with fruit trees three or four years ago, and these now gave promise of bearing.

The glen in which Chillacot lay was a "coombe," that is, it was a short lateral valley running up into hill or moor, and opening into the main valley through which flows the arterial stream of the district. It was a sequestered spot, and as the glen was narrow, it did not get its proper share of sun. Some said the glen was called Chillacoombe because it was chilly, but the rector derived the name from the Celtic word for wood.

We hear much now-a-days about hereditary instincts and proclivities, and a man's character is thought to be determined by those of his ancestors. But locality has much to do with the determination of character. Physical causes model, develope, or alter physical features; national characteristics are so shaped, and why not individual characters also?

The climate of England is responsible to a large extent for the formation of the representative John Bull. The blustering winds, the uncertain weather, go to the hardening of the Englishman's self-reliance, determination, and perseverance under difficulties. He cannot wait to make hay till the sun shines, he must make it whether the sun shines or not. Having to battle with wind and rain, and face the searching east wind, to confront sleet, and snow, and hail from childhood, when, with shining face and satchel he goes

to school, the boy learns to put down his head and defy the weather. Having learned to put down his head and go along as a boy, he does the same all through life, not against weather only, but against everything that opposes, with teeth clenched, and fists rolled up in his breeches pocket.

The national characteristic affects the very animals bred in our storm-battered isle. A friend of the author had a puppy brought out to him on the continent from England. That little creature sought out, fought, and rolled over every dog in the city where it was.

"Dat ish not a doug of dish countree!" said a native who observed its pugnacity.

"Oh, no, it is an English pup."

"Ach so! I daught as much, it ist one deevil!"

Perhaps the gloom of Chillacot, its sunlessness, was one cause of the gravity that affected Saltren's mind, and made him silent, fanatical, shadow-haunted. The germs of the temperament were in him from boyhood, but were not fully developed till after his marriage and the disappointment and disillusioning that ensued. He was a man devoid of humour, a joke hurt and offended him; if it was not sinful, it closely fringed on sin, because he could not appreciate it. He had a tender, affectionate heart, full of soft places, and, but for his disappointment, would have been a kindly man; but he had none to love. The wife had betrayed him, the child was not his own. The natural instincts of his heart became perverted, he waxed bitter, suspicious, and ready to take umbrage at trifles.

When Arminell came in front of the cottage, she saw Mrs. Saltren leaning over the gate. She was a woman who still bore the traces of her former beauty, her nose and lips were delicately moulded, and her eyes were still lovely, large and soft, somewhat sensuous in their softness. The face was not that of a woman of decided character, the

mouth was weak. Her complexion was clear. Jingles had inherited his good looks from her. As Arminell approached, she curtsied, then opened the gate, and asked—

“Miss Inglett, if I may be so bold, I would so much like to have a word with you.”

“Certainly,” answered Arminell.

“Will you honour me, miss, by taking a seat on the bench?” asked Mrs. Saltren, pointing to a garden bench near the door.

Arminell declined graciously. She could not stay long, she had been detained already, and had transgressed the luncheon hour.

“Ah, Miss Inglett,” said the captain’s wife, “I did so admire and love your dear mother, the late lady, she was so good and kind, and she took—though I say it—a sort of fancy to me, and was uncommonly gracious to me.”

“You were at the park once?”

“I was there before I married, but that was just a few months before my lord married your mother, the first Lady Lamerton. I never was in the house with her, but she often came and saw me. That was a bad day for many of us—not only for you, miss, but for all of us—when she died. If she had lived, I don’t think we could have fallen into this trouble.”

“What trouble?” Arminell asked. She was touched by the reference to her mother, about whom she knew and was told so little.

“I mean, miss, the mine that is being stopped. Her dear late ladyship would never have allowed it.”

“But it runs under the house.”

“Oh, miss, nothing of the sort. That is what Mr. Macduff says, because he is trying to persuade his lordship to close the mine. It is not for me to speak against him, but he is much under the management of Mrs. Macduff, who is a very fine lady; and because the miners don’t

salute her, she gives Macduff no rest, day or night, till he gets his lordship to disperse the men. My lord listens to him, and does not see who is speaking through his lips. My brother James is a comical-minded man, and he said one day that Mr. Macduff was like the automaton chess-player that was once exhibited in London. Every one thought the wax doll played, but there was a young girl hid in a compartment under the table, and she directed all the movements of the chess-player."

"I really cannot interfere between my lord and his agent, or intercept communications between Mr. Chess-player and Mrs. Prompter."

"Oh, no, miss; I never meant anything of the sort. I was only thinking how different it would have been for us if my lady—I mean my late lady—were here. She was a good friend to us. Oh, miss, I shall never forget when I was ill of the typhus, and everyone was afraid to come near us, how my good lady came here, carrying a sheet to the window, and tapped, and gave it in, because she thought we might be short of linen for my bed. I've never forgot that. I keep that sheet to this day, and I shall not part with it; it shall serve as my winding sheet. The dear good lady was so thoughtful for the poor. But times are changed. It is not for me to cast blame, or to say that my lady as now is, is not good, but there are different kinds of goodnesses as there are cabbage roses and Marshal Neils."

Arminell was interested and touched.

"You knew my dear mother well?"

"I am but a humble person, and it is unbecoming of me to say it, though I have a brother who is a gentleman, who associates with the best in the land, and I am better born than you may suppose, seeing that I married a captain of a manganese mine. I beg pardon—I was saying that her ladyship almost made a friend of me, though I say it who

ought not. Still, I had feelings and education above my station, and that perhaps led her to consult me when she came here to Orleigh and knew nothing of the place or of the people, and might have been imposed on, but for me. After I recovered of the scarlet fever——”

“I thought it was typhus?”

“It began scarlet and ended typhus. Those fevers, miss, as my brother James says in his droll way, are like tradesmen, they make jobs for each other, and hand on the patient.”

“How long was that after Mr. Jingles—I mean your son, Mr. Giles Saltren, was born?”

“Oh,”—Mrs. Saltren looked about her rather vaguely—“not over long. Will you condescend to step indoors and see my little parlour, where I think, miss, you have never been yet, though it is scores and scores of times your dear mother came there.”

“I will come in,” said Arminell readily. Her heart warmed to the woman who had been so valued by her mother.

The house was tidy, dismal indeed, and small, but what made it most dismal was the strain after grandeur, the gay table-cover, the carpet with large pattern, the wall paper black with huge bunches of red and white roses on it, out of keeping with the dimensions of the room.

Arminell looked round and felt a rising sense of the absurdity, the affectation, the incongruity, that at any other moment would have made her laugh inwardly, though too well-bred to give external sign that she ridiculed what she saw.

“Ah, miss!” said Mrs. Saltren, “you’re looking at that beautiful book on the table. My lady gave it me herself, and I value it, not because of what it contains, nor for the handsome binding, but because of her who gave it to me.”

Arminell took up the book and opened it.

"But—" she said,—“the date. It is an annual, published three years after my mother's death.”

"Oh, I beg your pardon, miss, I did not say my late lady gave it me. I said, my lady. I know how to distinguish between them. If it had been given me by your dear mother, who is gone, my late lady, do you suppose it would be lying here? I would not keep it in the room where I sit but rarely, but have it in my bed-chamber, where I could fold my hands over it when I pray.”

"I should like," said Arminell, "to see the sheet that my poor dear mother gave you, and which you cherish so fondly, to wrap about you in the grave.”

"With pleasure," said Mrs. Saltren. "No—I won't say with pleasure, for it calls up sad recollections, and yet, miss, there is pleasure in thinking of the goodness of that dear lady who is gone. Lor! miss, it did seem dreadful that my dear lady when on earth didn't take precedence over the daughter of an earl, but now, in heaven, she ranks above marchionesses.”

Then she asked Arminell to take a chair, and went slowly upstairs to search for the sheet. While she was absent the girl looked round her, and now her lips curled with derision at the grotesque strain after refinement and luxury which were unattainable as a whole, and only reached in inharmonious scraps and disconnected patches.

This was the home of Jingles! What a change for him, from these mean surroundings, this tasteless affectation, to the stateliness and smoothness of life at Orleigh Park! How keenly he must feel the contrast when he returned home! Had her father dealt rightly by the young man, in giving him culture beyond his position? It is said that a man has sat in an oven whilst a chop has been done, and has eaten the chop, without being himself roasted, but then the temperature of the oven was gradually raised and gradually lowered. Young Saltren had jumped into the

oven out of a cellar and passed every now and then back again to the latter. This alteration of temperatures would kill him.

Some time elapsed before Mrs. Saltren returned. She descended the stair slowly, sighing, with the sheet over her arm.

"You need not fear to catch the fever from it, miss," she said, "it has been washed many times since it was used—with my tears."

Arminell's heart was full. She took the sheet and looked at it. How good, how considerate her mother had been. And what a touch of real feeling this was in the faithful creature, to cherish the token of her mother's kindness.

The young are sentimental, and are incapable of distinguishing true feeling from false rhodomontade.

"Why!" exclaimed Arminell, "it has a mark in the corner S S,—does not that stand for your husband's initials?"

The woman seemed a little taken aback, but soon recovered herself.

"It may be so. But it comes about like this. I asked Stephen to mark the sheet with a double L. for Louisa, Lady Lamerton, and a coronet over, but he was so scrupulous, he said it might be supposed I had carried it away from the park, and that as the sheet was given to us, we'd have it marked as our own. My husband is as particular about his conscience as one must be with the bones in a herring. It was Bond's marking ink he used," said Mrs. Saltren, eager to give minute circumstances that might serve as confirmation of her story, "and there was a stretcher of wood, a sort of hoop, that strained the linen whilst it was being written on. If you have any doubt, miss, about my story, you've only to ask for a bottle of Bond's marking ink and you will see that they have circular stretchers—which is a proof that this is the identical sheet

my lady gave me. Besides, there is a number under the letters."

"Yes, seven."

"That was my device. It rhymes with heaven, where my lady,—I mean my late lady—is now taking precedence even of marchionesses."

Arminell said nothing. The woman's mind was like her parlour, full of incongruities.

"Look about you, miss," continued Mrs. Saltren; "though I say it, who ought not, this is a pretty and comfortable house with a certain elegance which I have introduced into it. My brother, James Welsh, is a gentleman, and writes a great deal. You may understand how troubled my husband is at the thought of leaving it."

"But—why leave?"

"Because, Miss Inglett, he will have no work here. He will be driven to go to America, and, unfortunately, he has expended his savings in doing up the house and planting the garden. I am too delicate to risk the voyage, so I shall be separated from my husband. My son Giles has already been taken from me." Then she began to cry.

A pair of clove-pinks glowed in Arminell's cheeks. She could hardly control her voice. These poor Saltrens were badly used; her father was to blame. He was the occasion of their trouble.

"It must not be," said Arminell, starting up, "I will go at once and speak to his lordship."

CHAPTER VII.

A VISION.

WITHOUT another word Arminell left the cottage. As she did so, she passed Captain Saltren speaking to Captain Tubb. The former scarce touched his hat, but the latter saluted her with profound respect.

When she was out of hearing, Saltren, whose dark eyes had pursued her, said in a low, vibrating tone :

“There she goes—one of the Gilded Clique.”

“I think you might have shown her more respect, man,” said Tubb. “Honour to whom honour is due, and she is honourable.”

“Why should I show respect to her? If she were a poor girl earning her bread, I would salute her with true reverence, for God hath chosen the poor, rich in faith. But is it not written that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for the rich to enter into heaven?”

“You’ve queer fancies, Cap’n.”

“They are not fancies,” answered Saltren; “as it is written, so I speak.” Then he hesitated. Something was working in his mind, and for a moment he doubted whether to speak to one whom he did not regard as of the elect.

But Saltren was not a man who could restrain himself under an over-mastering conviction, and he burst forth in a torrent of words, and as he spoke his sombre eyes gleamed with excitement, and sparks lit up and flashed in them.

Soft they usually were, and dreamy, but now, all at once they kindled into vehement life.

"I tell you, Tubb, the Lord hath spoken. The last days are at hand. I read my Bible and I read my newspaper, and I know that the aristocracy are a scandal and a burden to the country. Now the long-suffering of heaven will not tarry. It has been revealed to me that they are doomed to destruction."

"Revealed to *you* !"

"Yes, to me, an unworthy creature, as none know better than myself, full of errors and faults and blindness—and yet—to me. I was wrestling in spirit near the water's edge, thinking of these things, when, suddenly, I heard a voice from heaven calling me."

"How—by name? Did it call you Cap'n?"

Saltren hesitated. "I can't mind just now whether it said, Saltren, Saltren ! or whether it said Mister, or whether Cap'n, or Stephen. I daresay I shall remember by-and-by when I come to turn it over in my mind. But all has come on me so freshly, so suddenly, that I am still dazed with the revelations."

"Go on," said Tubb, shaking his head dubiously.

"And when I looked up, I saw a book come flying down to me out of heaven, and I held up my hands to receive it, but it went by me into the water hard by where I was."

"Somebody chucked it at you," exclaimed the practical Tubb.

"I tell you, it came down out of heaven," said Saltren, impatiently. "You have no faith. I saw the book, and before I could lay hold of it, it went under the raft—I mean, it went down, down in the water, and I beheld it no more."

"What sort of a book was it?"

"I saw it but for a moment, as it floated with the back upwards, before it disappeared. There was a head on it

and a title. I could not make out whose head, but I read the title, and the title was clear."

"What was it?"

"'The Gilded Clique.'"

"Clique! what was that?"

"A society, a party, and I know what was meant."

"Some one must have chucked the book," again reasoned the prosaic Tubb.

"It was not chucked, it fell. I was wrong to tell you of my vision. The revelation is not for such as you. I will say no more."

"And pray, what do you make out of this queer tale?" asked the captain of the lime quarry, with ill-disguised incredulity.

"Is it not plain as the day? I have had revealed to me that the doom of the British aristocracy is pronounced, the House of Lords, the privileged class—in a word, the whole Gilded Clique?"

Tubb shook his head.

"You'll never satisfy me it weren't chucked," he said. "But, to change the subject, Saltren. You have read and studied more than I have. Can you tell me what sort of a plant Quinquagesima is, and whether it is grown from seed, or cuttings, or layers?"

CHAPTER VIII.

ABREAST.

As Arminell left Chillacot she did not observe the scant courtesy shown her by Captain Saltren. She was brimming with sympathy for him in his trouble, with tender feeling for the wife who had so loved her mother, and for the son who was out of his proper element. It did not occur to her that possibly she might be regarded by Saltren with disfavour. She had not gone many paces from the house before she came on a middle-aged couple, walking in the sun, abreast, arm in arm, the man smoking a pipe, which he removed and concealed in the pocket of his old velvet shooting coat, when he saw Arminell, and then he respectfully removed his hat. The two had been at church. Arminell knew them by sight, but she had not spoken at any time to either. The man, she had heard, had once been a gamekeeper on the property, but had been dismissed, the reason forgotten, probably dishonesty. The woman was handsome, with bright complexion, and very clear, crystalline eyes, a boldly cut nose, and well curved lips. The cast of her features was strong, yet the expression of the face was timid, patient and pleading.

She had fair, very fair hair, hair that would imperceptibly become white, so that on a certain day, those who knew her would exclaim, "Why, Joan! who would have thought it? Your hair is white." But some years must pass before the bleaching of Joan's head was accomplished. She was only forty, and was hale and strongly built.

She unlinked her arm from that of her companion and came curtsying to Arminell, who saw that she wore a hideous crude green kerchief, and in her bonnet, magenta bows.

"Do you want me?" she asked coldly. The unæsthetic colours offended her.

"Please, my lady!"

"I am not 'my lady.'"

Joan was abashed, and retreated a step.

"I am Miss Inglett. What do you want?"

"I was going to make so bold, my la—I mean, miss——."

Joan became crimson with shame at so nearly transgressing again. "This is Samuel Ceely."

Arminell nodded. She was impatient, and wanted to be at home. She looked at the man whose pale eyes quivered.

"Is he your husband?" asked Arminell.

"No, miss, not exactly. Us have been keeping company twenty years—no more. How many years is it since us first took up wi' each other, Samuel?"

"Nigh on twenty-two. Twenty-two."

"Go along, Samuel, not so much as that. Well, miss, us knowed each other when Samuel was a desperate wicked (*i.e.* lively) chap. Then Samuel was keeper at the park. There was some misunderstanding. The head-keeper was to blame and laid it on Samuel. He's told me so scores o' times. Then came his first accident. When was that, Samuel?"

"When I shooted my hand away? Nineteen years come next Michaelmas."

"Were you keeper, then?" asked Arminell.

"No, miss, not exactly."

"Then, how came you with the gun?"

"By accident, quite by accident."

Joan hastily interfered. It would not do to enquire too closely what he was doing on that occasion.

"When was your second accident, Samuel?"

"Fifteen years ago."

"And what was that?" asked Joan.

"I falled off a waggon."

Arminell interrupted. This was the scene of old Gobbo and young Gobbo re-enacted. It must be brought to an end. "Tell thou the tale," she said with an accent of impatience in her intonation, addressing Joan. "What is your name?"

"Joan Melhuish, miss. Us have been sweethearts a great many years; and, miss, the poor old man can't do a sight of work, because of his leg, and because of his hand. But, lor-a-mussy, miss, his sweepings is beautiful. You could eat your dinner, miss, off a stable floor, where Samuel has swept. Or the dog-kennels, miss,—if Samuel were but with the dogs, he'd be as if in Paradise. He do love dogs dearly, do Samuel. He's that conscientious, miss, that if he was sound asleep, and minded in his dream there was a bit o' straw lying where he ought to ha' swept clean, or that the dogs as needed it, hadn't had brimstone put in their water, he'd get up out o' the warmest bed—not, poor chap, that he's got a good one to lie on—to give the dog his brimstone, or pick up thickey (that) straw."

She was so earnest, so sincere, that her story appealed to Arminell's feelings. Was the dust that the witch, Patience, had cast on her head, taking effect and opening her eyes to the sorrows and trials of the underground folk?

"Please, miss! It ain't only sweeping he does beautifully. If a dog has fleas, he'll wash him and comb him—and, miss, he can skin a hare or a rabbit beautiful—beautiful! I don't mean to deny that Samuel takes time about it," she assumed an apologetic tone, "but then, miss, which be best, to be slow and do a thing thorough, or be quick and half do it? Now, miss, what I was going to make so bold as to say was, Samuel do be a-complaining of the rheumatics.

They've a-took'n bad across the loins, and it be bad for him out in all weathers weeding turnips, and doing them odd and dirty jobs men won't do now, nor wimen n'other, what wi' the advance of education, and the franchise, and I did think it would be wonderful good and kind o' you, miss, if you'd put in a word for Samuel, just to have the sweeping o' the back yard, or the pulling of rabbits, or the cleaning up of dishes; he'd make a rare kitchen-maid, and could scour the dogs as well, and keep 'em from scratching over much. Lord, miss! what the old man do want is nourishing food and dryth (dry air) over and about him."

"I'll speak to the housekeeper—no, I will speak to her ladyship about the matter. I have no doubt something can be done for Samuel."

Joan curtsied, and her honest face shone with satisfaction.

"Lord A'mighty bless you, miss! I have been that concerned about the old man—he is but fifty, but looks older, because of his two accidents. H's shy o' asking for hisself, because he was dismissed by the late lord; the upper keeper laid things on him he'd no right to. He's a man, miss, who don't set no store on his self, because he has lost a thumb and two fingers, and got a dislocated thigh. But there's more in Samuel than folks fancy; I ought to know best, us have kept company twenty years."

"Are you ever going to get married?"

Joan shook her head.

"But how is it," asked Arminell, "that you have not been married yet, after courting so long?"

"First the bursted gun spoiled the chance—but Lord, miss, though he's lost half his hand, he is as clever with what remains as most men with two."

"He was unable to work for his living, I suppose?"

"And next he were throwed down off a waggon, and he's been lame ever since. But, Lord, miss! he do get along with the bad leg, beautiful, quite beautiful."

"You are not nearer your marriage than you were twenty years ago," said Arminell, pitifully.

"I have been that troubled for Samuel," said Joan, not replying, but continuing her own train of thought; "I've feared he'd be took off to the union, and then the old man would ha' died, not having me to walk out with of a Sunday and bring him a little 'baccy. And I—I'd ha' nort in the world to live for, or to hoard my wages for, wi'out my old Samuel."

The woman paused, turned round and looked at the feeble disabled wreck of a man, who put his crippled hand to his forelock and saluted.

"How came he to fall off the waggon?" asked Arminell.

"Well, miss, it came of my being on the waggon," explained Ceely, "I couldn't have falled off otherwise."

"Were you asleep? Was the waggon in motion?"

Joan hastily interfered, it would not do for too close an enquiry to be made into how it came that Samuel was incapable of keeping himself firm on the waggon; any more than it would do to go too narrowly into the occasion of his shooting off his hand.

"What was it, miss, you was a-saying? Nearer our marriage? That is as the Lord wills. But—miss—us two have set our heads on one thing. I don't mind telling you, as you're so kind as to promise you'd get Samuel a situation as kitchen-maid."

"I did not promise that!"

"Well, miss, you said you'd speak about it, and I know well enough that what you speak about will be done."

"What is it you have set your heart on? Can I help you to that?"

"You, miss! O no, only the Lord. You see, miss, I don't earn much, and Samuel next to nothing at all, so our ever having a home of our own do seem a long way off. But there's the north side of the church, where Samuel's

two fingers and thumb be laid, us can go to them. And us have bespoken to the sexton the place whereabout the fingers and thumb lie. I ha' planted rosemary there, and know where it be, and no one else can be laid there, as his fingers and thumb be resting there. And when Samuel dies, or I die, whichever goes first is to lie beside the rosemary bush over his fingers and thumb, and when the t'other follows, Samuel or I will be laid beside the other, with only the fingers and thumb and rosemary bush between us,—'cos us ain't exactly married—and 'twouldn't be respectable wi'out. 'Twill be no great expense," she added, apologetically.

When Joan Melhuish had told her all the story, Arminell no longer saw the crude green kerchief and the magenta bows. She saw only the face of the poor woman, the crystal-clear eyes in which light came, and then moisture, and the trembling lips that told more by their tremor than by the words that passed over them, of the deep stirring in the humble, patient heart.

How often it is with us that, looking at others, who belong to an inferior, or only a distinct class, we observe nothing but verdigris green kerchiefs and magenta bows, something out of taste, jarring with our refinement, ridiculous from our point of view. Then we talk of the whole class as supremely barbarous, grotesque and separate from us by leagues of intervening culture, a class that puts verdigris kerchiefs on and magenta bows, as our forefathers before Christ painted their bodies with woad. And we argue—these people have no human instincts, no tender emotions, no delicate feelings—how can they have, wearing as they do green ties and magenta bows? Have the creatures eyes? Surely not when they wear such unæsthetic colours. Hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Not with emerald-green kerchiefs. If we prick them they do not bleed. If we tickle they cannot laugh. If we poison them,

they will not die. If we wrong them—bah! They wear magenta bows and are ridiculous.

It needs, may be, a sod taken from their soil, a little dust from their hearth shaken over our heads to open our eyes to see that they have like passions and weaknesses with ourselves.

Arminell, without speaking, turned to Samuel, and looked at him.

What was there in this poor creature to deserve such faithful love? He was a ruin, and not the ruin of a noble edifice, but of a commonplace man. There was no beauty in him, no indication of talent in his face, no power in the moulding of his brow. He looked absurd in his short, shabby, patched, velveteen coat, his breeches and gaiters on distorted limbs. His attitudes with the ill-set thigh were ungainly. And yet—this handsome woman had given up her life to him.

“He don’t seem much to you, perhaps, miss,” said Joan, who eagerly scanned Arminell’s face, and with the instinctive jealousy of love discovered her thoughts. “But, miss, what saith the Scripture? Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature. You should ha’ seen Samuel before his accidents. Then he was of a ruddy countenance, and goodly to look on. I always see him as he was.”

She still searched Arminell’s face for token of admiration.

“Lord, miss! tastes differ. Some like apples and others like onions. For my part, I do like a hand wi’ two fingers on it, it is uncommon, it is properly out o’ the way as hands are. And then, miss, Samuel do seem to me to ha’ laid hold of eternity wi’ two fingers and a thumb, having sent them on before him, and that is more than can be said of most of us poor sinners here below.”

She still studied the girl’s countenance, and Arminell controlled its expression.

“Then,” Joan continued, “as for his walk, it is lovely.

It is ever dancing as he goes along the road. It makes one feel young—a girl—to have his arm, there be such a lightness and swing in his walk.”

“But—” Arminell began, then hesitated, and then went on with a rush, “are you not discontented, impatient, miserable?”

“Why so, miss?”

“Because you have loved him so long and see no chance of getting him.”

“No, miss. If I get him here, I get him to give me only half a hand; if I get him in the other world, I get his whole hand, thumb and two first fingers as well. I be content either way.”

CHAPTER IX.

TANDEM.

ON the edge of a moor, at the extreme limits to which man had driven back savage nature, where were the last boundary walls of stone piled up without compacting mortar, was a farm-house called Court. It stood at the point where granite broke out from under the schistose beds, and where it had tilted these beds up into a perpendicular position. A vast period of time had passed since the molten granite thus broke forth, and the ragged edges of upturned rock had been weathered down to mere stumps, but on these stumps sat the homestead and farm-house of Court, with a growth of noble sycamores about it.

A stream brawling down from the moor swept half round this mass of old worn-down rock, a couple of granite slabs had been cast across it, meeting in the middle on a rude pier, and this served as a foot-bridge, but carts and waggons traversed the water, and scrambled up a steep ascent cut out of the rock by wheels and winter runs.

If Court had been a corn-growing farm, this would have been inconvenient, but this Court was not. It was a sheep and cattle rearing farm, and on it was tilled nothing but a little rye and some turnips.

In an elastic air fresh from the ocean, at a height of a thousand feet above the sea, the lungs find delight in each inhalation, and the pulses leap with perennial youth.

Pecuniary embarrassments cease to oppress, and the political outlook appears less threatening.

At the bottom of yonder valley three hundred feet above the sea-level, where a steamy, dreamy atmosphere hangs, we see that England is going to the dogs; the end of English commerce, agriculture, the aristocracy, the church, the crown, the constitution is at hand—in a word, the *Saturday Review* expresses exactly our temper of mind. A little way up the hill, we think the recuperative power of the British nation is so great, the national vigour is so enormous, that it will shake itself free of its troubles in time—in time, and with patience—in a word, we begin to see through the spectacles of the *Spectator*. But when we have our foot on the heather, and scent the incense of the gorse, and hear the stonechat and the pewit, and see the flicker of the silver cotton grass about us, why then—we feel we are in the best of worlds, and in the best little nook of the whole world, and that all mankind is pushing its way, like us, upward with a scramble over obstacles; it will, like us, in the end breathe the same sparkling air, and enjoy the same extensive outlook, and be like us without care.

From Court what a wonderful prospect was commanded. The Angel in the Apocalypse stood with one foot on the land, and the other in the sea; so Court stood half in the rich cultivated garden of the Western Paradise, and half in the utter desolation of treeless moor. To south and west lay woodlands and pasture, parks and villages, tufts of Scotch fir, cedars, oak and elm and beech, with rooks cawing and doves cooing, and the woodpecker hooting among them; to the east and north lay the haunt of the blackcock and hawk and wimbrel, and tracts of heather flushed with flower, and gorse ablaze with sun, and aromatic as incense.

Far away in the north-west, when the sun went down, he

set in a quiver of gold-leaf, he doubled his size, and expired like the phoenix in flame. That was when he touched the ocean, and in touching revealed it.

What a mystery there is in distance? How the soul is drawn forth, step by step, over each rolling hill, down each half-disclosed valley. How it wonders at every sparkle where a far-off window reflects the sun, and admires where the mists gather in wooded clefts, and asks, what is that? when the sun discloses white specks far away on slopes of turquoise; as the Israelites asked when they saw the Manna. How a curling pillar of smoke stirs up interest, rising high and dispersing slowly. We watch and are filled with conjecture.

As the afternoon sun shines sideways on the moor-cheek, it discloses what it did not reveal at other times, the faintest trace of furrows where are no fields now, where no plough has run since the memory of man. Was corn once grown there? At that bleak altitude? Did the climate permit of its ripening at one time? No one can answer these questions, but how else account for these furrows occasionally, only under certain aspects discernible? And to Court there was a corn-chamber, a sort of tower standing on a solid basement of stone six feet above the ground, a square construction all of granite blocks, floored within with granite, and with a conical slated roof, and a flight of stone steps leading up to it. A tower—a fortress built against rats, who will gnaw through oak and even lead, but must break their teeth against granite.

The corn-chamber was overhung by a sycamore, and at its side a rown, or "witch-bean" as it is locally called—a mountain ash—had taken root, flourished and ripened its crimson berries.

On the lowest step but one of the flight leading to the corn-chamber sat Thomasine Kite, the daughter of the white-witch, Patience. The evening was still and balmy in

the valleys ; here on the moor-edge airs ever stirred and were crisp. The bells were ringing for evening service far away in a belfry that stood on a hill against the western sky, and their music came in wafts mingled with the hum of the wind among the heather, and the twitter among the sycamores.

Aloft, on the highest twig of the tallest tree sat a crow calling itself in Greek, Korax ! and so pleased with the sound of its name in Greek that it repeated its name again and again, and grew giddy with vanity, and nearly over-balanced itself, and had to spread wings and recover its poise.

Thomasine was in a bad humour. All the household of Court were away, master and mistress, men and maids, and she was left alone like that crow on the tree-tops.

"Tamsin !" muttered the girl, "what a foolish name I have got. It's like damson, of which they make cheese. If they'd call me by my proper name of Thomasine, it would be all right, but Tamsin I hate."

"Korax !" croaked the crow. "Why was I not born in Greece to be called Korax ? Crow is vulgar."

"I'm tired of my place," grumbled the girl ; "here I am a servant maid at Court, out of the world and hard worked. Nothing going on, nothing to see, no amusements, nothing to read."

Why was Thomasine restless and impatient for a change ? She did not herself know. She was dissatisfied with what ? She did not herself properly know. She had vigorous health ; she had work, but not more than what with her fresh youth and hearty body she could easily execute. She had sufficient to eat. The farmer and his wife were not exacting, nor rough and bad tempered. The workmen and women on the farm were as workmen and women are, with good and bad points about them. Elsewhere she would meet with much the same sort of associates. She knew

that. Her wage was not high, but it was as much as she was likely to get in a farm-house, and a small wage there with freedom was better than a big wage in a gentleman's family with restraint. She knew that. Yet she was not content. She wanted something, and she did not know what. She would give her mistress notice and go elsewhere. Whither? She did not know. At any rate it would be elsewhere, a change; and she craved for a change, for she had been a twelvemonth in one place. Would she like her new situation? She did not know. Would she, when in a town, look back on the healthy life at Court? Possibly; she did not know. But she could not stay, because as the passion for roving is in the gipsy blood, so was the fever of unrest in hers. She was tired of life as it presented itself to her, uniform, commonplace, unsensational.

There was a period in European history when all was change, when every people plucked itself out of its ancestral ground and went a wandering; when the whole of the continent was trampled over by races galloping west, like cattle and wild beasts disturbed by a prairie fire. What was the cause? We hardly know, but we know that there was not a people, a race, a class which was not thus inspired with the passion for change of domicile. The Germans entitle that period the time of the great Folk-wandering. We are in the midst of such another Folk-wandering, but it is not now the migration of races and nations, but of classes and individuals; the passion for change drives the men and women out of the country to towns, and the young out of their situations. It is in the air, it is in their blood.

The evening sun touched the western sea, and flared up in a spout of fire. Then Thomasine rose to her feet. Her red hair had fallen, and she bent her arms behind her, to do it up. Gorgeous that hair was in the evening sun, it seemed itself to be on fire, to be incandescent in every hair, and her attitude as she stood on the step was grand, her

vigorous, graceful form, her splendid proportions were shown in perfection, with bosom expanded, and her hands behind her head collecting and tying and twisting the fire that rained off it. The evening sun was full on her, and filled her eyes that she could see nothing; but her handsome face was shown illuminated as a lamp against the cold grey walls of the corn-chamber. Her shadow was cast up the steps and against the door, a shadow that had no blackness in it, but the purple of the plum.

“Tamsin! my word, you are on fire!”

She started, let go her hair, and it fell about her, enveloping her shoulders and arms in flame. Then she put one hand above her eyes, and looked to see who addressed her.

“You here, Archelaus! What has brought you to this lost corner of the world, this time o’ day?”

“You, of course, Tamsin, what else?”

“I wish you’d choose a better time than when I’m doing up my hair.”

“I could not wish a better time than when you are in a blaze of glory.”

The young man who spoke was Archelaus Tubb, son of the captain of the slate quarry. He was a simple, good-humoured, not clever young man. Strongly built, with sparkling eyes and a merry laugh, he was just such a fellow as would have made his way in the world, had he been endowed with wits. He was not absolutely stupid, but he was muddle-headed. He succeeded in nothing that he undertook. He had been apprenticed to a carpenter, and at the expiration of three years was unable even to make a gate.

He tried his hand at gardening, and dug graves for potatoes, and put in bulbs upside down. He had faculties, but was incapable of applying them, or was too careless to call them together and concentrate them on his work. There seemed small prospect of his earning wage above that of a day-labourer.

He had fair hair, an honest face, always on the alert for a laugh. As he had been unqualified for any trade, his father had given him work in the quarry, but therein he earned but a labourer's wage, fourteen shillings a week.

Thomasine reseated herself on the lowest step but one, and put her feet on the lowest, and crossed her hands on her lap.

"Arkie," said she; "I am going away from Court, the life here is too dull for me. I want to see the world."

"Where are you going, Tamsin?"

"Not to bury myself in a place where nothing is doing, again."

"Nothing doing! There is plenty of work on a farm."

"Work!" scorned Thomasine. "Who wants work now? not I—I want to go where there are murders and burglaries and divorces—into a place where there is life."

"Queer sort of life that," said Archelaus, casting himself down on the lowest step.

"I want to be where those things are done and talked about," said Thomasine; "what do I care about how the corn looks, and whether the sheep have the foot-rot, and what per stone is the price of bullocks? Now—you need not sit on my feet."

"I will choose a higher step," said the lad; then he stepped past her, and seated himself on that above her.

"Upon my word, Tamsin," he said, "you have wonderful hair. It is like mother's copper kettle new scoured, and spun into spiders' threads. Some red hair," continued he, "is coarse as wire, but this," he put his fingers through the splendid waves, "but this——"

"Is not for you to meddle with," said Thomasine. "Shall I make my fortune with it in the world?"

She stood up, and stepped past him, and seated herself on the step immediately above that he occupied.

"In the world!" repeated Archelaus. "What world—"

that where murders and burglaries and divorces are the great subject of talk?"

"Aye—in the world where something is doing, where there is life, not in the world of mangold-wurzel."

"I do not know, Tamsin," said the lad dispiritedly. "I hope not."

"Why not? I am not happy here. I want to be where something is stirring. "Why," said Thomasine with a flash of anger in her cheek and eye and the tone of her voice—"Why am I to be a poor farm girl, and Miss Arminell Inglett to have all she wishes? She to be wealthy, and I to have nothing? She to be happy, and I wretched? I suppose I am good-looking, eh, Arkie?"

"Of course you are," said he; "but, Tamsin, I cannot talk to you as you are behind me."

"I do not care to see your face," said the girl, "the back of your collar and coat are enough for me. Is that your Sunday wide-awake?"

"Yes—what have you against it?"

"Only that there is a hole in it, there"—she thrust her finger through the gap in the crown, and touched his scalp.

"I know there is, Tamsin; a coal bounced on to it from the fire."

"Without bringing light to your brain."

"I shall change my place," said Archelaus; he stood up, stepped past the girl, and seated himself above her.

"Now," said he, "I can look down on, and seek for blemishes in your head."

"You will find none there—eh! Arkie? Shall I make my fortune with my hair? Coin it into gold and wear purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day? That is what I want and will have, and I don't care how I get it; so long as I get it. My head and hair are not for you."

Then she stood up, strode past Archelaus, and planted herself on the step higher than that he occupied.

"This is a queer keeping company, tandem fashion, and changing the leader," laughed Archelaus.

"We are not keeping company," answered Thomasine. "Tandem is best as we are, single best of all."

"I don't see why we should not keep company," said the lad.

"I do," answered Thomasine sharply; "have I not made it plain to you that I didn't want a life of drudgery, and that I choose to have a life in which I may amuse myself?"

"Let us try to sit on the same step," said Archelaus, "and then we can discuss the matter together, better than as we are, with one turning the back on the other."

"There is not room, Arkie."

"I'll try it all events," said he, as he got up and seated himself beside her. "Now we are together, and can keep steady if one puts an arm round the other."

"I will not be held by you," said she, and mounted to the step above; then she burst out laughing, and pointed. "Do y' look there," she said, "there is a keeping of company would suit you."

She indicated a pair that approached the farm. The man was lame, with a bad hip, and his right hand was furnished with two fingers only—it was Samuel Ceely. His maimed hand was thrust between the buttons of his waistcoat, and on his right arm rested the coarse red hand of Joan Melhuish.

"Do y' look there!" exclaimed Thomasine, "are they not laughable? They have been courting these twenty years, and no nigher marriage now than when they began, it might be the same with us, were I fool enough to listen and wait for what you offer."

"It is no laughing matter," said the lad, "it is sad."

"It is sad that she should be such a fool! Will his

fingers grow again, and his hip right itself? She should have looked about for another lover twenty years ago, now it is too late, and I take warning from her. You, Arkie, are like Samuel Ceely, not in body but in wits, crippled and limping there."

"Tamsin!" exclaimed Arkie, "you shall not speak like that to me." He stood up and stepped to where she was, and seated himself again beside her. That was on the highest step, and they were now both with their backs to the granary door. He tried to take her hand.

"No, Arkie," she said, "I speak seriously, I will not be your sweetheart. I like you well enough. You are a good-tempered, nice fellow, very good natured, and always cheerful, but I won't have you. I can't live on fourteen shillings a week, and I won't live in the country where there is nothing going on, but cows calving and turnips growing. There is no wickedness in either, and wickedness makes life various and enjoyable. I can read and write and cypher, and am tired of work accordingly. I want to enjoy myself. There is mistress!" she exclaimed, stood up, stepped aside, missed her footing, and fell to the bottom of the steps.

"Oh, Tamsin, if only you had let me hold you!" cried Archelaus, and ran down to raise her. "Then you would not have fallen." She had sprained her foot and could only limp.

CHAPTER X.

"SABINA GREEN."

IN the four-hundred-and-thirty-first number of the *Spectator* is a letter from Sabina Green, on the disordered appetite she had acquired by eating improper and innutritious food at school. "I had not been there above a Month, when being in the Kitchen, I saw some Oatmeal on the Dresser ; I put two or three Corns in my Mouth, liked it, stole a Handful, went into my Chamber, chewed it, and for two Months after never failed taking Toll of every Pennyworth of Oatmeal that came into the House. But one Day playing with a Tobacco-pipe between my Teeth, it happened to break in my Mouth, and the spitting out the Pieces left such a delicious Roughness on my Tongue, that I could not be satisfied till I had champ'd up the remaining Part of the Pipe. I forsook the Oatmeal, and stuck to the Pipes three Months, in which time I had disposed of thirty-seven foul Pipes, all to the Boles. I left off eating of Pipes and fell to licking of Chalk. Two Months after this, I lived upon Thunderbolts, a certain long, round, bluish Stone, which I found among the Gravel in our Garden."

Arminell's mental appetite was as much disordered as the physical appetite of Sabina Green. Whether Gaboriau's novels bore any analogy to the foul tobacco-pipes, we do pretend to say, their record of vice certainly left an agreeable roughness on her mental palate, but now without any intermediate licking of chalk, she has clenched her teeth

upon a thunderbolt—a question hard, insoluble, beyond her powers of mastication. Besides, she was wholly unaware that the thunderbolt had been laid in her path expressly that she might exercise her teeth upon it.

A hundred and fifty years ago, Sabina Green picked corns, licked chalk and munched tobacco pipes, and the same thing goes on nowadays. There are tens of thousands of Sabina Greens with their mouths full, and with no appetite but for tobacco-pipes or thunderbolts. We have advanced—our pipes are now meerschaum—foam of the sea.

We have known young ladies who would touch nothing but meringues, and thereby seriously impair their constitutions and complexions. We have known others who could touch nothing but literary meringues, novels, and whose digestion revolted at solid food, but who crunched flummery romance at all times of day and night, till the flummery invaded their brains, filled their mouths, frothed in their hearts; and then tired of sweets they look out for what is pungent or foul—like the old tobacco-pipes.

An unwholesome trick into which German women fall is that of “naschen,” of nibbling comfits and cakes all day long. They carry cornets of bonbons in their pockets, and have recourse to them every minute. They suffer much from disordered digestion, and fall into the green sickness, because they lack iron in the blood. How can they have iron in the blood when they eat only sugar? Our English girls have a similar infirmity, they nibble at novels, pick at the unsubstantial, innutritious stuff that constitutes fiction all day long. Do they lack iron in their moral fibre? Are their souls bloodless and faint with the green sickness? How can it be other on a diet of flummery.

The stomach of the nibbler never hungers, only craves; the appetite is supplanted by nausea. The symptoms of disorder are permanent; languor of interest, debility of

principle, loss of energy in purpose, a disordered vision, and creeping moral paralysis.

If Arminell had reached the condition of one of these novel-nibblers, what she had heard would have produced no effect upon her heart or brain because neither heart nor brain would have been left in her. But she had not been a habitual novel-reader, she had read whatever came to hand, indiscriminately; and the flummery of mere fiction would never have satisfied her, because she possessed, what the novel-nibblers do not possess, intelligence. No control had been exercised over her reading, consequently she had read things that were unsuitable. She had a strong character, without having found outlets for her energy. A wise governess would have tested her, and then led her to pursuits which would have exerted her ambition and occupied her interest; but her teachers had been either wedded to routine or intellectually her inferiors. Consequently she had no special interests, but that inner eagerness and fire which would impel her to take up and follow with enthusiasm any object which excited her interest. Her friends said of Arminell with unanimity that she was a disagreeable girl, but none said she was an empty-headed one.

On reaching the house, Arminell found that lunch was over, and that her father had gone out. He had sauntered forth, as the day was fine, to look at his cedars and pines in the plantations, and with his pocket-knife remove the lateral shoots. Lady Lamerton was taking a nap previous to the resumption of her self-imposed duties at Sunday-school.

Arminell was indisposed to go to school and afternoon service in the church. After a solitary lunch she went upstairs to the part of the house where was Giles' school-room. She had not seen her brother that day, and as the little fellow was unwell, she thought it incumbent on her to visit him.

She found the tutor, Giles Inglett (*vulgo*, Jingles) Saltren, in the room with the boy. Little Giles had a Noah's Ark on the table, and was trying to make the animals stand on their infirm legs, in procession, headed by the dove which was as large as the dog, and half the size of the elephant.

Mr. Saltren sat by the window looking forth disconsolately. The child had a heavy cold, accompanied by some fever.

"If you wish to leave the school-room, Mr. Saltren," said Arminell, "I am prepared to occupy your place with the captive."

"I thank you, Miss Inglett," answered the tutor. "But I have strict orders to go through the devotional exercises with Giles this afternoon, the same as this morning."

"I will take them for you."

"You are most kind in offering, but having been set my tale of bricks to make without straw, I am not justified in sending another into the clayfield, in my room."

"I see—this is a house of bondage to you, Mr. Saltren. You hinted this morning that you meditated an *in exitu Israel de Egypto*."

The young man coloured.

"You tread too sharply on the heels of the *pied de la lettre*, Miss Inglett."

"But you feel this, though you shrink from the expression of your thoughts. You told me yourself this forenoon that you were not happy. If you leave us, whither do you propose going?"

"A journey in the wilderness for forty years."

"With what Land of Promise in view?"

"I have set none before me."

"None? I cannot credit that. Every man has his Land of Promise towards which he turns his face. Why leave the leeks and onions of Goshen, if you have but a stony desert in view as your pasture? I suppose the heart is a

binnacle with its needle pointing to the pole—though each man may have a different pole. South of the equator, the needle points reversedly to what it pointed north of it. An anchor, an iron link, a nail even may divert the needle, but to something it must turn.”

“Miss Inglett—had Moses any personal hope to reach and establish himself in the land flowing with milk and honey, when he led Israel from the brick-kilns? He was to die within sight of the land, and not to set foot thereon.”

“But, Mr. Saltren; who are your Israel? Where are the brick-kilns? Who are the oppressors?”

“Can you ask?” The tutor paused and looked at the girl. “But I suppose you fail to see that the whole of the civilised world is an Egypt, in which some are taskmasters and others slaves; some enjoy and others suffer. Miss Inglett—you have somehow invited my confidence, and I cannot withhold it. It is quite impossible that the world can go on as it has been, with one class drawing to itself all that life has to offer of happiness, and another class doomed to toil and hunger and sweat, and have nothing of the light and laughter of life.”

Arminell seated herself.

“Well,” she said, “as Giles is playing with his wooden animals, trotting out the contents of his ark; let us turn out some of the strange creatures that are stuffed in our skulls, and marshal them. I have been opening the window of my ark to-day, and sending forth enquiries, but not a blade of olive has been brought to me.”

“As for the ark of my head,” said the tutor, with a bitter smile, “it is the reverse of that of Noah. He sent forth raven and dove, and the dove returned, but the raven remained abroad. With me, the dark thoughts fly over the flood and come home to roost; the dove-like ones—never.”

“I am rather disposed,” said Arminell, laughing, “to liken my head to a rookery in May. The matured thoughts

are a-wing and wheeling, and the just fledged ones stand cawing at the edge of their nests, with fluttering wings, afraid to fly, and afraid to stay and be shot."

"To be shot?—by whom?"

"Perhaps, by your wit. Perhaps by my lord's blunderbuss."

"I will not level any of my poor wit at them. Let your thoughts hop forth boldly that I may have a sight of them."

An exclamation of distress from Giles.

"What is the matter?" asked Arminell, turning to her brother.

"The giraffe has broken his leg, and I want him to stand because he has such a long neck."

"If you were manly, Giles, you would not say, the giraffe has broken his leg, but—I have broken the giraffe's leg."

"But I did not, Armie. He had been packed too tightly with the other beasts, and his leg was so bent that it broke."

"Mend it with glue," she advised.

"I can't—it is wrong to melt glue on Sunday. Mamma would not like it."

The conversation had been broken along with the giraffe's leg, and neither Arminell nor young Saltren resumed it for some time. Presently the girl said, "Mr. Saltren, do you know what sort of men Addison called Fribblers? They are among men what flirts are among women, drawing girls on and then disappointing them. There are plenty of flirts and fribblers in other matters. There are flirts and fribblers with great social and religious questions, who play with them, trifle with them, hover about them, simulate a lively interest in them, and then—when you expect of them a decision and action on that decision, away they fly in another direction, and shake all interest and inquiry out of their thoughts. I have no patience with such flirts or fribblers." She spoke with a little bitterness. She was thinking of her step-mother. The tutor knew it, but did not allow her to see that he did.

"Do you not think," he said, "that they fribble from a sense of incompetence to grapple with these questions? The problems interest them up to a certain point. Then they see that they are too large for them, or they entail consequences they shrink from accepting, consequences that will cost them too dear, and they withdraw."

"Like the young man in the Gospel who went away sorrowful for he had great possessions. He was a fribbler."

"Exactly. He was a fribbler. He was insincere and unheroic."

"I could not fribble," said Arminell, vehemently. "If I see that a cause is right, I must pursue it at whatsoever consequence to myself. It is of the essence of humdrum to fribble. Do you know, Mr. Saltren, I have had a puzzling problem set before me to-day, and I shall have no rest till I have worked it out? Why is there so much wretchedness, so much inequality in the world?"

"Why was Giles' giraffe's leg broken?"

Arminell looked at him with surprise, suspecting that instead of answering her, he was about to turn off the subject with a joke.

"The world," said Saltren, 'is like Giles' Noah's Ark, packed full—over full—of creatures of all kinds, and packed so badly that they impinge on, bruise, and break each other. Not only is the giraffe's leg broken, but so are the rim of Noah's hat, and the ear of the sheep, and the tusk of the elephant. It is a congeries of cripples. We may change their order, and we only make fresh abrasions. The proboscis of the elephant runs into the side of the lamb, and Noah's hat has been knocked off by the tail of the raven. However you may assort the beasts, however carefully you may pack them, you cannot prevent their doing each other damage."

Mr. Saltren turned to little Giles and said:—

"Bring us your box of bricks, my boy."

"It is Sunday," answered the child. "Mamma would not wish me to play with them."

"I do not wish to make a Sabbath-breaker of you," answered the tutor, "nor are your sister and I going to do other than build Babel with them—which is permissible of a Sunday."

The little boy slid off his seat, went to his cupboard, and speedily produced the required box, which he gave to Mr. Saltren.

The tutor drew forth the lid. The bricks were all in place compacted in perfect order.

Then he said, with half-sneer, half-laugh, "There are no gaps between them. The whole assemblage firm as it were one block. Not a breakage anywhere, not room for a breakage."

"No," said Arminell, "of course not. They all fit exactly because they are all cubes. The bricks," she laughed, "have no long necks like the giraffe, or legs or horns, or proboscis, or broad-brimmed hats, liable to be broken. Of course they fit together."

"If you shake the ark—the least concussion produces a breakage, one or two beasts suffer. You may toss the box of bricks about ; and nothing is hurt. Why?"

Arminell was impatient. "Of course the reason is plain."

"The reason is plain. *The bricks are all equal.* If it were so in the world of men, there would be no jars, no fractures, no abrasions, but concord, compactness, peace."

Arminell said nothing. She closed her eyes and sat looking at the bricks, then at the animals Giles had arranged.

The tutor said no more, but his eyes, bright and eager, were on the girl's face.

Presently Arminell had gathered her thoughts together sufficiently to speak.

"That, then, is the solution you offer to my problem.

But to me it does not seem solved. There the animals are. They are animals—and not bricks.”

“They are animals, true, but they must be shaken and shaken together, till all their excrescences are rubbed away, and then they will fit together and find sufficiency of room. That is how marbles are made. Shapeless masses of stone are put in a bag and rattled till all their edges and angles are rattled off.”

“What an ark would remain! You complain of some animals crippling others, this scheme of yours would involve a universal mutilation—the animals resolved into undistinguishable, shapeless, uninteresting trunks. The only creature that would come out scatheless would be the slug. All the rest would be levelled down to the condition of that creature—which is a digesting tube, and nothing more.” Then Arminell stood up. “It is time for me to be off,” she said; “her ladyship will be back from church, and oh! Mr. Saltren, I have interfered with the Psalms and Lessons.”

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE AVENUE.

ACCORDING to the classic story, the Sphinx demanded of all who visited her the solution of an enigma—and that enigma was *Man*.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, on a quiet ordinary Sunday morning, Arminell, a young girl without experience, had been confronted with the Sphinx, and set the same enigma, an enigma involving others, like the perforated Chinese puzzle-balls, an enigma that has been essayed and answered repeatedly, yet always remains insoluble, that, as it has assumed fresh aspects, has developed new perplexities. Arminell had been wearied with the routine and restraint of social life, its commonplace duties and conventionalities, and had been fired with that generous though mistaken dislike to the insincerities and formalities of civilisation, so often found among the young—generous, because bred of truth ; mistaken, because it ignores the fact that the insincerities impose on no one, and the formalities are made of mutual compromises, such as render life, social life, possible.

Arminell was in this rebellious mood, when she was brought face to face with a problem beyond her powers to unravel. She might as well, with a rudimentary knowledge of algebraic symbols, have been set to work out Euler's proof of the Binomial Theorem. She was like Fatima when she opened Blue-Beard's secret chamber, and saw in it an

array of victims. Of these victims disclosed to her, one was Jingles, another Patience Kite ; then came Captain Saltren and his wife ; and next hung in the dismal cabinet of horrors, Samuel Ceely and Joan Melhuish. The world was indeed a Blue-Beard's room. If you but turned the key you saw an array of misery and tearful faces, and hearts with blood distilling from them. It was more than that—it was a box with a Jack in it. She had touched the spring, and a monster had flown up in her face, not to be compressed and buttoned down again.

How could the facts of existence be reconciled with the idea of Divine Justice? On one side were men and women born to wealth and position and happiness ; on the other, men and women denied the least of the blessings of life. Why were some of God's creatures petted and pampered, and others kicked about and maltreated? Was the world of men so made from the beginning, or had things so come about through man's mismanagement, and if so, where was the over-ruling Providence which governed the world? When the Noah's Ark arrived new from the great toy-shop whence issue the planets and spheres, were all the figures round and fitted together, only afterwards in the rearrangement to impinge on and mutilate each other? Or had they been all alike in the beginning and had developed their horns and proboscises, their tusks and broad-brimmed hats? Life is a sort of pantomime, that begins with a fairy tale, leads to a transformation scene, and ends, perhaps, with low comedy. In a moment when we least expect it, ensues a blaze of light, a spectacular arrangement of performers, and then, away fall the trappings of splendour, and forth, from under them, leap out harlequin, clown, and pantaloon. The knights cast off their silver armour, the fairies shed their gauzy wings, kings and queens depose their crowns and sceptres, and there are revealed to us ordinary men and women, with streaks of paint on their faces, and patches of

powder in their hair, perpetrating dismal jokes, the point of which we fancy is levelled at ourselves.

To some men and women the transformation scene arrives late in life, but to all inevitably at some time ; and then when the scene on the stage before us is changed, a greater transformation ensues within.

When we were children we believed that everything glittering was gold, that men were disinterested and women sincere. The transformation scene came on us, perhaps with coruscations of light and grouping of colours and actors, perhaps without, and went by, leaving us mistrustful of every person, doubtful of everything, sceptical, cynical, disenchanted. Is not—to take a crucial case—marriage itself a grand transformation scene that closes the idyl of youth, and opens the drama of middle age ? We live for a while in a fairy world, the flowers blaze with the most brilliant colours, the air is spiced as the breezes of Ceylon, angels converse with men, and sing æthereal music, manna floats down from heaven, containing in itself all sweetness ; sun and moon stand still o'er us, over against each other, not to witness a conflict, as of old in Ajalon, but to brighten and prolong the day of glamour. Then the bride appears before us, as Eve appeared to Adam, unutterably beautiful and perfect and innocent, and we kneel in a rapture, and dare not breathe, dare not speak, nor stir ; and swoon in an ecstasy of wonder and adoration.

Then tingle the marriage bells. The transformation scene is well set with bridesmaids and orange-blossoms, and a wedding breakfast, postboys with favours, and a shower of rice, and then—?

The fairy tale is over. The first part of the pantomime is over. The colours have lost their brilliancy, the flowers shrivel, the scents are resolved into smells of everyday life, broiled bacon, cabbage water, and the light is eclipsed as by a November fog. The men for the way-rate, the water-rate, and

the gas-rate are urgent to have a word with us. There descend on our table at every quarter most bitter bills—those of the butcher and the green-grocer, the milliner's little account, and the heavy itemless bill from the doctor. What shall we say about our Eve, the beautiful, the all-but divine, the ideal woman? The all-but divine turns out to have a touchy temper and a twanging tongue, falls out with her cook, dismisses her, and consequently serves you cold mutton and underboiled potatoes.

The transformation is complete, and how does it leave us? In a rage at our folly? Cursing our idealism? Rasped and irritable? Withdrawing more and more from the society of our Eve, and our Eden turned to an espalier garden, to our club? So it is in many cases. The transformation scene is a trial, and certain ones there are that never recover the shock of disenchantment; but there are others, on the other hand, who endure, and to them comes in the end a reward. These continue to sit in their box, listless, paring their nails, turning the programme face downwards. Half contemptuously, wholly void of interest, they lend a dull ear to what follows, and look on with a wondering eye, convinced that the rest is farce and buffoonery and a vexation of spirit, which must however be sat through; then, little by little fresh interests arise, tiny new actors invade the stage, with sweet but feeble voices, saying nothing of point, yet full of poetry. The magic begins to work once more, the little fingers weave a spell that lays hold of heart and brain, and conjures up a new world of fantasy. The flowers re-open and flush with colour, the balmy air fans our jaded faces, again the songs of angels reach our ears, the clouds dispel, the manna falls, Eve resumes her beauty, not the old beauty of childlike innocence and freshness, but that of ripened womanhood, of sweet maternity, of self-command and self-devotion.

We sit hushed with our head in our hands, and look with

intense eye, and listen with sharpened ear, and the tears rise and run down our cheeks. We have forgotten the old Eden with its fantastic imaginations, in the more matured, the richer, the fuller, and above all the more real paradise that is now revealed.

In the case of Arminell Inglett there was no enchantment of colour, no setting of tableau, for the transformation scene ; it came on her suddenly but also quietly. In one day, on a quiet country Sunday, when she walked out of the dull and stuffy school, she passed, as it were, through a veil, out of childland into the realm of Sphinx.

In the evening, after a dull dinner, instead of remaining in the drawing-room with my lady, who had taken up a magazine, Arminell put a shawl over her head and shoulders, went forth into the garden, and thence to the avenue.

The evening was pleasantly warm, the weather beautiful ; beneath the trees the dew did not fall heavily. A new moon was shining. The girl thought over what she had heard and seen that day—over the troubles and wrongs of Captain Saltren, driven from his occupation, and yet chained to the house that was his own, and with which he would not part ; over the defiant scepticism of Patience Kite, at war in heart with God and man ; over the suffering lives of Samuel and Joan, united in heart, yet severed by fate, looking to a common grave as the marriage bed, and Arminell felt almost contempt for these latter, because they accepted their lot without resentment. She thought over what young Mr. Saltren had said about his own position, and she was able to understand that it was one of difficulty and discomfort.

Then she turned her mind to the Sunday-school, where, whilst outside of it, within the narrow confines of Orleigh parish, there was so much of trouble and perplexity, my lady was placidly teaching the children to recite as parrots the names of the books of the Apocrypha, which they were

not to read for the establishment of doctrine, and Captain Tubb was enunciating arrant nonsense about the names of the Sundays preceding Lent.

The avenue was composed of ancient oaks. It was reached from the garden, which intervened between the house and it. The avenue was not perfectly in line, because the lay of the land did not admit of its being carried at great length without a curve, following the slope of the hill that rose above it, and fell away below in park-land to the river.

The walk was gravelled with white spar. It commanded an exquisite view down the valley of the Ore, over rich meadow-land and pasture, dotted with clumps of trees, beech, chestnut, and Scotch pine. A line of alders marked the course of the river, to where, by means of a dam, it had been widened into a lake. On the further side of the river, the ground gently rose in grassy sweeps to the wooded hills. To the south-west the river wound away about shoulders of richly-clothed hills, closing in on each other, fold on fold. The avenue was most delightful in the evening, when the setting sun gilded the valley with its slant beams, turned the trunks of the pines scarlet, and cast the shadows of the park trees a purple blue on the illuminated grass.

Oaks do not readily accommodate themselves to form avenues, they are contorted, gnarled, consequently oak avenues are rarely met with. That at Orleigh had the charm of being uncommon.

The evening was still, the sky was full of light, so much so that the stars hardly showed. The light spread as a veil from the north, from behind the Orleigh woods, and reflected itself in the dew that bathed the grass. Arminell was attached to this walk, in great measure because she could at almost all times saunter in it undisturbed.

She had not, however, on this occasion, been in it half

an hour, before she saw her father coming to her. He had left his wine ; there were, as it happened, no guests in the house, and he and the tutor had not many topics in common.

"Well, Armie !" he said, "I have come out to have a cigar, and lean on you. My lady told me I should find you here."

"And, papa, I am so glad you have come, for I want to have a word with you."

"About what, child ?" Lord Lamerton was a direct man—a man in his position must be direct to get through all the business that falls to him, business which he cannot escape from, however much he may desire it.

"Papa," said Arminell, "it is about the Saltrens."

"What about them ?"

"If you give up the manganese—what is Captain Saltren to do ?"

"Stephen will find work somewhere, never fear."

"But he cannot leave his house."

"That he will have to sell ; the railway company want to cross Chillacombe at that point. He will get a good price, far beyond the value of the house and plot of land."

"Papa—must the manganese be given up ?"

"Of course it must. I have no intention of allowing myself to be undermined."

"But it is so cruel to the men who worked on it."

"Manganese no longer pays for working. There has been a loss on the mine for the last five years. We are driven out of the market by the Eiffel manganese. The Germans work at less wage, and our men refuse to have their wage reduced."

"But what are the miners to do ?"

"They were given warning that the mine would be closed, as long as five years ago ; and the warning has been renewed every year since. They have known that they

must seek employment elsewhere. They will have to go after work, work will not come to them—it is the same in every trade. All businesses are liable to fluctuations, some to extinction. When the detonating cap was invented, the old trade of flint chipping on the Sussex downs began to languish; with the discovery of the lucifer match it expired altogether. When adhesive envelopes were introduced, the wafer-makers and sealing-wax makers were thrown out of work, and the former trade was killed outright. I was wont to harvest oak-bark annually, and put many hundreds of pounds in my pocket. Now the Americans have superseded tan by some chemical composition, and there is no further sale for bark. I am so many hundreds of pounds the poorer.”

“Yes, papa, that is true enough, but you have a resisting power in you that others have not. You have your rents and other sources of income to fall back on; these poor tradesmen and miners and artizans have none. I have read that in Manitoba the secret of the magnificent corn crops is found in this, that the ground is frozen in winter many feet deep, and remains frozen in the depths all summer, but gradually thaws and sends up from below the released water to nourish the roots of the wheat, which are thus fed by an unfailing subterranean fountain. It is so with you, you are always heavy in purse and flush in pocket, because you also have your sources always oozing up under your roots.”

“My dear Armie, my subterranean source—the manganese—is exhausted; for five years instead of being a source it has been a sink.”

“Whereas,” continued Arminell, “the poor and the artizan lie on shelfy rock, with shallow soil above it. A drought—a week of sun—and they are parched up and perish.”

“My dear girl, the analogy is false. The difference be-

tween us is between the rooted and the movable creature. Do they not live on us, eat us, consume our superfluity? We are vegetables—that root in the soil, and the tradesmen and artizans nibble and browse on us. The richer our leaf, the more succulent our juices, the more nutriment we supply to them. When they have eaten us down to the soil, they move off to other pastures and nibble and browse there. When we have recovered, and send up fresh shoots, back they come, munch, munch, munch. If one supply fails, others open. There is equipoise—I dare say there are twice as many hands employed in making matches and adhesive envelopes now, as there were of old chipping flints and making wafers.”

“That may be, but the drying up of one spring before another opens must cause distress. Where is that other one, that the necessitous may drink of it? Ishmael was dying of thirst in the desert on his mother Hagar’s lap, within a stone’s throw of a well of which neither knew till it was shown them by an angel.”

“Of course there is momentary distress, but the means of locomotion are now so great that every man can go about in quest of work. Things always right themselves in the end.”

“They do not right themselves without the crushing and killing of some in the process. Tell me, papa, how is this to be explained? I have to-day encountered two poor creatures who have loved each other for twenty years, and are too abject in their poverty to be able even now to marry. No fault of either accounts for this. Accident, misfortune, divide them—such things ought not to be.”

“But they are—they cannot be helped.”

“They ought not to be—there must be fault somewhere. Either Providence in ruling destinies rules them crooked, or the social arrangements brought about by civilization are to blame.”

"Here, Armie, I cannot follow you. I am content with the providential ordering of the world."

"Of course you are, papa, on fifty thousand a year."

"You interrupt me. I say I am content with the social structure as built up by civilization."

"I have no doubt about it—you are a peer. But what I want to know is, how do the providential and social arrangements look to the Fredericks with the Empty Pockets, not what aspect they wear to Maximilian and Le Grand Monarque. Do you suppose that Captain Saltren is content that his livelihood should be snatched from him; or Patience Kite that her father and mother should have died, leaving her in infancy a waif; or Samuel Ceely, that he should have blown off his hand and blown away his life's happiness with it, and dislocated his hip and put his fortunes for ever out of joint thereby, so as to be for ever incapacitated from making himself a home, and having a wife and little children to cling about his neck and call him father?"

"Old Sam was not all he ought to have been before he met with his accidents."

"Nor are any of us all we ought to be. Papa, why should it have fallen to your lot to have two wives, and Samuel Ceely be denied even one?"

"Upon my word, Armie, I cannot tell."

"I do not suppose you can see how those are who live on the north side of the hill always in shade and covered with mildew, when you bask on the south side always in sun, where the strawberries ripen early, and the roses bloom to Christmas."

"I beg your pardon, child, I have had my privations. We cannot afford to go to town this season. I have had to make a reduction in my rents of twenty per cent. I get nothing from my Irish property, cannot sell my bark, lose by my manganese. Are you satisfied?"

"No, papa, your privations are loss of luxuries, not of

necessaries. Those who have been exposed to buffets of fortune, been scourged by the cynical and cruel caprice which rules civilized life, will rise up and exact their portions of life's pleasures and comforts. They will say,—we will not be exposed to the chance of being full to-day and empty to-morrow, of working without hope—like Samuel and Joan.”

“Sam does not work.”

“That is the fault of Providence which blew off his hand and distorted his leg. I say, the needy and the workers will ask why we should be well-dressed, well-housed, well-fed, hear good music, buy good pictures, ride good horses——” her thoughts moved faster than her words; she broke off her sentence without finishing it. “Papa! why, at a meet, should Giles have his pony and little Cribbage run on his feet?”

“Upon my soul,” answered Lord Lamerton, “I can’t answer in any other way than this—because I keep a pony and the rector does not for his little boy.”

“But, papa, I think the time must come when you will have to justify your riding a good hunter and wearing a red coat; and I for wearing a tailor-made habit, whilst Miss Jones has but a skirt.”

“Look here, Armie,” said her father, “how dense, how like snow the fog is lying on the pasture by the water.”

“Yes, papa, but——”

“There is no fog here, on the higher land.”

“No, papa.”

“There is frost below when there is none here.”

“Yes, papa.”

“Why so?”

“Because that lies low, and this high.”

“But why should that lie low, and this high?”

“Of course, because—it is the configuration of the land.”

"But how unreasonable, how unjust, that there should be such configuration of the land, as you call it. There should be no elevations and no depressions anywhere—a universal flat is the landscape for you."

Arminell winced. She saw the drift of her father's remarks.

"My dear," he said, "there must be inequalities in the social level, but I am not sure that these very inequalities do not give charm and richness to the social picture. Each level has its special flora. The marigold and the milkmaid and the forget-me-not love the low moist bottom where the fog and frost hang, and will not thrive here. Those ups and downs, those hills and valleys which so shock your sense of fitness, are the secret of richness, are the secret of fertility. In equatorial Africa, Dr. Schweinfurth found a dead level and perennial swamp. In Mid-Asia, Huc traversed an Alpine plateau absolutely sterile. It is a very unreasonable thing to some that our moors should contain so many acres of unprofitable bog, that they should be sponges receiving, and growing nothing. They say that we, the wealthy, are these absorbing sponges, unprofitable bogs of capital. But, my dear child, if the bogs were all drained, all the water would run off as fast as it fell. They retain the water and gradually discharge it on the thirsty lowlands. And so is it with us. We spend what we receive and enrich therewith those beneath. But come—I shall go in. I am feeling chilled."

"I will take another turn first," said Arminell.

"Don't fret yourself, my dear," said her father, "about these matters. Take the world as it is."

"Papa—that advice comes too late. I cannot."

CHAPTER XII.

SINTRAM.

LORD LAMERTON returned to the house ; he threw away his cigar-end, and went in at the snuggerly door, the door into the room whither the gentlemen retired for pipes and spirits and soda-water, a room ornamented with foxes' heads and brushes, whips, hunting-pictures, and odds and ends of all sorts. He shut the door and passed through it into that part of the house in which was the schoolroom, and Giles' sleeping apartment. As he entered the passage, Lord Lamerton heard piercing shrieks, as from a child yelling in terror or pain.

In a moment, Lord Lamerton ran up the stairs towards the bedroom of his son. The nurse was there already, with a light, and was sitting on the bed, endeavouring to pacify the child. Giles sat up in his night-shirt, in the bed clothes, with his eyes wide open, his fair head disordered, striking out with his hands in recurring paroxysms of terror.

"What is the matter with him ?" asked the father.

"My lord—he has been dreaming. He has had one or two of these fits before. Perhaps his fever and cold have had to do with it." Then hastily to Giles who began to kick and beat, and went into a fresh fit of cries, "There, there, my dear, your papa has come to see you. Have you nothing to say to him ?"

But the little boy was not to be quieted. He was either still asleep, or, if awake, he saw something that bereft him of the power of regarding anything else.

"There will be no questioning him, my lord, till he is thoroughly roused," said the nurse.

"Bring me a glass of water."

Whilst the woman went for the tumbler, Lord Lamerton seated himself on the bedside, and drew the little boy up, and seated him on his lap.

"Giles, my darling, what is the matter?"

Then the little fellow clung round his father's neck, and the tears broke from his eyes, and he began to sob.

"What is the matter, my pet, tell me? Have you had bad dreams? Here, drink this draught of cold water."

"No, no, take it away," said the child. "I want papa to stay. Papa, you won't be taken off, will you? Papa, you will not leave me, will you?"

"No, my dear. What have you been thinking about?"

"I have not been thinking. I saw it."

"Saw what, Giles?"

Lord Lamerton stroked the boy's hair; it was wet with perspiration, and now his cheeks were overflowed with tears. The shrieks had ceased. He had recovered sufficient consciousness to control himself; "Papa I was at the window."

"What, in your night-shirt? After you had been put to bed? That was wrong. With your heavy cold you should not have left your bed."

The child seemed puzzled.

"Papa, I do not understand how it was. I would not have left my bed for the world, if I thought you did not wish it; and I do not remember getting out—still, I must have got out; for I was at the window."

"He has not left his bed. He has been dreaming, my lord," explained the nurse in an undertone; and Lord Lamerton nodded.

"Papa, dear."

"Yes, my pet."

“Are you listening to me?”

“I am all attention.”

“Papa, I was at the window. But I am very sorry that I was there, if you are annoyed. I will not do it again, dear papa. And the moon was shining brightly on the drive. You know how white the gravel is. It was very white with the moon on it. I did not feel at all cold, papa; feel me, I am quite warm.”

“Yes, my treasure, go on with your story.”

“Then I watched something black come all the way up the drive, from the lodge-gates, through the park. I could not at first make out what it was, but I saw that it was something very, very black, and it came on slowly like a great beetle. But when it was near, then I saw it was a coach drawn by four black horses, and there was a man on the box, driving, and he was in black. There was no silver nor brass mounting to the harness of the horses, or I should have seen it sparkle in the moonlight. And, dear papa, the coach stole on without making any noise. I saw the horses trotting, and the wheels of the coach turning, but there was no sound at all on the gravel. Was that not strange?”

“Very strange indeed, my dear.”

“But there was something much stranger. I saw that the horses had no heads, and also that the coachman had no head. His hat with the long weeper was on the top of the carriage. He could not wear it because he was without a head. Was not that queer?”

“Very queer,” answered Lord Lamerton, and signed to the nurse to leave the room. His face looked grave, and he held the little boy to his heart, and kissed his forehead with lips that somewhat quivered.

“Then, papa, the carriage stopped at the entrance, and I could see through the window panes to the gravel with the moon on it, on the other side, and there was no one at all in the coach. It was quite, quite empty.”

"Did you not think it was Dr. Blewett come to see you, my little man?"

"No, papa, I did not think anything about whose coach it was. But when it remained at the door, and no one got out, I saw it must be staying for some one to enter it."

"And did any one come out of the house?"

Then the little boy began to sob again, and cling round his father's neck, and kiss him.

"Well, my dear Giles?"

"Oh, papa!—you will not go away!—I saw you come out of the door, and you went away in the coach—"

"I!" Lord Lamerton drew a sigh of relief. The dream of the dear little fellow, associated with his illness, had produced an uneasy effect on his father's mind—he feared it might portend the loss of the boy, but if the carriage waited only for himself—!

"That, papa, was why I cried, and was frightened. You will not go! you must not go!" The child trembled, clasping his father, and rubbing his wet cheek against his father's face.

Then Lord Lamerton called the nurse from the next room. "Master Giles," he said, "is not thoroughly roused. The current of his thoughts must be diverted. Throw that thick shawl over him. I will carry him down into the drawing-room to my lady, and show him a picture-book. Then he will forget his dream and go to sleep. Come for him in a quarter of an hour."

The nurse did as required. Then Lord Lamerton stood up, carrying his son, who laid his head on his father's shoulders, and so he bore him through the passages and down the grand staircase to the drawing-room. The little fair face rested on the shoulder, with the fair hair hanging down over the father's back, and one hand was clutched in the collar. Lord Lamerton kissed the little hand. He was not afraid of making the child's cold worse, the evening was so warm.

Lady Lamerton was sitting on a settee with a reading lamp on a table at her side, engaged on an article in one of the contemporary magazines, on Decay of Belief in the World.

Lady Lamerton was a good woman, who on Sunday would on no account read a novel, or a book of travels, or of profane history. Her Sabbatarianism was a habit that had survived from her childish education, long after she had come to doubt its obligation or advisability. But, though she would not read a book of travels, memoirs or history, she had no scruple in reading religious polemical literature. On one Sunday she found that miracles were incredible by intelligent beings, and next Sunday she had her faith in the miraculous re-established on the massive basis of a magazine article.

For an entire fortnight she laboured under the impression that Christianity had not a leg to stand on, and then, on the strength of another article, was sure it stood on as many as a centipede. For a while she supposed that dogmas were the cast cocoons of a living religion, and then, newly instructed, harboured the belief that it was as impossible to preserve the spirit of religion without them as it is to keep essences without bottles. At one time she supposed the articles of the creed to be the shackles of faith, and then that they were the characters by which faith was decipherable.

The sun was at one time supposed to be a solid incandescent ball, but astronomers probed it with their proboscises, and found that the body was enveloped in sundry wraps, which they termed photosphere and chromosphere, and which acted as jacket and overcoat to the body, which was declared to be black as that of a Hottentot. Some fresh proboscis-poking revealed the fact that the blackness supposed to be the sun-core was in fact an intervening vapour or rain of ash, and when this was perforated, the

very body of the sun was seen, red as that of an Indian, sullenly glowing, lifeless, almost lightless, a cinder. Moreover, the spectroscope was brought to analyse the constituents of the photosphere and to determine the metals in a state of incandescence composing it.

Lady Lamerton, looking through the telescopes of magazine articles and reviews, was continually seeing deeper into the great luminous, heat-giving orb of Christianity; was shown behind its photosphere, taught to despise its chromosphere, and saw exhibited behind them blackness, exhausted force, the ash of extinct superstitions. The critical spectroscope was, moreover, brought to bear on Christianity, and to analyse its luminous atmosphere, and resolve it into alien matter, none distinctively solar, all vulgar, terrestrial, and fusible.

The astronomer assures us that the fuel of the sun must fail, and then the world will congeal and life disappear out of it, and the critic announces the speedy expiring of Christianity. But, as—indifferent to the fact that the sun like a worn-out and made-up old beau is tottering to extinction—Lady Lamerton ordered summer bonnets, and laid out new azalea beds, just so was it with her religion. She continued to teach in Sunday-school, went to church regularly, read the Bible to sick people, did her duty in society, ordered her household, made home very dear to his lordship—in a word, lived in the light and heat of that same Christianity which she was assured, and by fits and starts believed, was an exploded superstition. As Lord Lamerton brought little Giles in his arms into the drawing-room, he whispered in his ear, "Not a word about the coach to mamma," and Giles nodded.

Lady Lamerton put her book aside and looked up.

"Oh, Lamerton! What are you doing? The boy is unwell, and ought to be in bed."

"He has been dreaming, my dear; has had the night-

mare, and I have brought him down for change, to drive the frightening thoughts away. He will not take cold, he is in flannel, and the shawl is round him. Besides, the evening is warm."

"He must not be here many minutes. He ought to be asleep," said his mother.

"My dear, I have promised him a look at a picture-book. It will make him forget his fancies. What have you over there?"

"No Sunday stories or pictures, I fear."

"Yonder is a book in red—illustrated. What is it?"

"'Sintram'—it is not a Sunday book."

"I have not read it for an age, but if I remember right, the D— comes into it."

"If that be the case it is perhaps allowable."

"What is the meaning of that picture?" asked the little boy, pointing to the first in the text. It was by Selous. It represented a great hall with a stone table in the centre, about which knights were seated, carousing. In the foreground was a boy kneeling, beating his head, apparently frantic. An old priest stood by, on one side, and a baron was starting from the table, and upsetting his goblet of wine.

"I cannot tell, I forget the story, it must be forty years since I read it. I have not my glasses. Pass the book to your mother, she will read."

Lady Lamerton drew the volume to her, and read as follows:—"A boy, pale as death, with disordered hair and closed eyes, rushed into the hall, uttering a wild scream of terror, and clinging to the baron with both hands, shrieked piercingly, 'Knight and father! Father and knight! Death and another are closely pursuing me!' An awful stillness lay like ice on the whole assembly, save that the boy screamed ever the fearful words."

"It is not a pretty story," said Lord Lamerton uneasily.

"Papa," whispered the boy, "I did not think that anything was following me. I thought"—his father's hand pressed his shoulders—"no, papa, I will not repeat it to mamma."

"What is it, Giles?" asked his mother, looking up from the book.

"Nothing but this, my dear," answered Lord Lamerton, "that I told Giles not to talk about his dreams. He must forget them as quickly as possible."

"What is that priest doing?" asked the child, pointing to the picture.

Lady Lamerton read further. "'Dear Lord Biorn,' said the chaplain, 'our eyes and thoughts have all been directed to you and your son in a wonderful manner; but so it has been ordered by the providence of God.'"

"I think, Giles, we will have no more of 'Sintram' to-night. Let us look together at the album of photographs. I will show you the new likeness of Aunt Hermione."

"Where is young Mr. Saltren?" asked Lady Lamerton.

"I fancy he has gone to see his mother. If I remember aright, he said, after dinner, that he would stroll down to Chillacot."

"There comes nurse," said Lady Lamerton. "Now, Giles, dear, you must go to sleep, and sleep like a top."

"I will try, dear mamma." But he clung to and kissed most lovingly, and still with a little distress in his flushed face, his father. He had not quite shaken off the impression left by his dream. When the boy was going out at the door, keeping his head over his nurse's shoulder, wrapped in the shawl, Lord Lamerton watched him lovingly. 'Then ensued a silence of a minute or two. It was broken by Lady Lamerton who said—

"We really cannot go on any longer in the crypt."

"The crypt?"

"You must build us a new school-room. The basement

of the keeper's cottage is unendurable. It did as a make-shift through the winter, but in summer the closeness is insupportable. Besides, the noises overhead preclude teaching and prevent learning."

"I will do what I can," said Lord Lamerton; "but I want to avoid building this year, as I am not flush of money. Such a room will cost at least four hundred pounds. It must have some architectural character, as it will be near the church, and must not be an eyesore. I wish it were possible to set the miners to build, so as to relieve them; but they are incapable of doing anything outside their trade."

"What will they do?"

"I cannot say. They have not been like the young larks in the fable. These were alarmed when they overheard the farmer and his sons discuss the cutting of the corn. But the men have been forewarned and have taken no notice of the warnings. Now they are bewildered and alarmed because they are turned off."

"Something must be done for them."

"I have been considering the cutting of a new road to the proposed station; but the position of the station cannot be determined till Saltren has consented to sell Chilla-cot, and he is obstinate and stupid about it."

"Then you cannot cut it till you know where the station will be?"

"Exactly; and Captain Saltren is obstructive. I am not at all sure that his right to the land could be maintained. I strongly suspect that I might reclaim it; but I do not wish any unpleasantness."

"Of course not. Is the road necessary?"

"Not exactly necessary; but I suppose work for the winter must be found for the men. As we have not gone to town this season, and if, as I propose, we abandon our projected tour to the Italian lakes in the autumn, I daresay

we can manage both the road and the school-room ; but I need not tell you, Julia, that I have had heavy losses. My Irish property brings me in not a groat. I have lost heavily through the failure of the Occidental Bank, and I have reduced my rents, I am sorry for the men. Cornish mining is bad, or the fellows might have gone to Cornwall. Perhaps if I find them work on the new road, mines may look up next year."

"Arminell has been speaking to me about Samuel Ceely. She wants him taken on," said her ladyship. "She will pay for him out of her own pocket."

Lord Lamerton's mouth twitched. "Arminell has asked me why I should have been allowed two Lady Lamertons, and he not one Mrs. Ceely."

"Arminell is an odd girl," said her ladyship. "But I am thankful to find her take some interest in the pcor. It is a new phase in her life."

"It seems to me," said Lord Lamerton, "that you and Armie are alike in one particular, and unlike in another. You both puzzle your brains with questions beyond your calibre, you with theological, she with social questions ; but you are unlike in this, that you take your perplexities easily, Arminell goes into a fever over hers."

"It is a bitter sorrow to me that I cannot influence her," said Lady Lamerton humbly. "But I believe that no one devoid of definite opinions could acquire power over her. I see that so much can be said, and said with justice on all sides of every question, that all my opinions remain, and ever will remain, in abeyance."

"I sincerely trust that the minx will not fall under the influence of those who are opinionated."

"Arminell is young, vehement, and, as is usual with the young, indisposed to make allowance for those who oppose what commends itself to her mind, or for those who do not leap at conclusions with the same activity as herself."

"And she is pert!" said Lord Lamerton. "Upon my soul, Julia, it is going a little too far to take me to task for having been twice married. And again, when I said something about my being content with the providential ordering of the world, she caught me up and told me that anyone with a coronet and fifty thousand a year would say the same. I have not that sum this year anyhow. Girls nowadays are born without the bump of reverence, and with that of self-assurance unduly developed."

Neither spoke for a few minutes.

Presently Lord Lamerton, who was looking depressed, and was listening, said:

"Hark! Is that Giles crying again?"

"I heard nothing."

"Possibly it was but my fancy. Poor little fellow. Something has upset him. It was unfortunate, Julia, our lighting on 'Sintram.'"

He stood up.

"I am not easy about the dear little creature. Did you see, Julia, how he kissed me and clung to me?"

"He is very fond of you, Lamerton."

"And I of him. I think I shall be more easy if I go up and see our Sintram, and learn whether he is asleep, or whether the bad dreams are threatening him. Poor little Sintram!"

"You will come back, Lamerton?"

"Yes, dear, when I have seen and kissed my little Sintram."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PRIVILEGED CLASS.

"Is it not a sad reflection," said Lady Lamerton on the return of his lordship, "that the men who influence others are those of one idea, in a word, the narrow? Because they are *borné* in mental vision, ignorant and prejudiced, they throw the whole force of their wills in one direction, they become battering rams, and the harder their heads the heavier the blows they deal. If we have knowledge, breadth of vision, charity, we cease to be certain, are no longer bigots, and our power of impressing others fails in proportion to our liberality. I feel my own incompetence with Arminell, but not with Arminell alone. I am conscious of it when taking my Sunday class. I dare insist on nothing, because I am convinced of nothing. I am so much afraid of laying stress on any religious topic, which has been, is, or may be controverted, that I restrain myself to the explanation of those facts which I know to be indisputable. I teach the children that when Ahasuerus sent young men with letters riding on dromedaries, these animals had two humps; whereas when Rebekah lighted down off her camel to meet Isaac, her creature had but one hump. And I console the dying with the last bulletins of the Palestine Exploration Fund determining the site of Ezion Geber. You know, my dear Lamerton, that there are in the atmosphere nitrogen which is the negative gas, oxygen which is positive, and carbonic acid which is deleterious to life. I

suppose it is the same with the spiritual atmosphere breathed by the soul, only the oxygen is so hard—nay, to me so impossible to extract, and I am so scrupulous not to communicate any carbonic acid to my scholars, that I fill the lungs of their souls with nitrogen only—a long category of negatives.”

“What you teach matters little. The great fact of your kindness and sympathy and sense of duty remains undisturbed, unassailable,” said Lord Lamerton.

“My dear,” said her ladyship, “I wish I could be of more use than I am ; but I am like Mrs. Quickly in the ‘Merry Wives of Windsor,’ who held commissions simultaneously for Doctor Caius, Slender and Fenton, and wished each and all success in his suit for sweet Anne Page. I am not a power, or anything appreciable, because my judgment hangs ever in suspense and flickers like a needle in a magnetic storm. When I hear our dear good rector lay down the law with thump of cushion in the pulpit, I know he is thoroughly sincere and that sincerity is the outcome of conviction. All this emphasis would go were he to read such-or-such an article in the *Westminster Review*, because his conviction would be sapped. But, without his conviction would he be of much use? Would he carry weight with his rustic audience? They value his discourses as the Israelite valued the strong blast that brought quails. If his mighty lungs blew nothing but vagueness, would they care to listen, or if they listened would they pick up anything where nothing was dropped? I am sure that the great leaders of men were men of one idea. Look at the apostles, illiterate fishermen, but convinced, and they upset heathendom. Look at Mahomet, an epileptic madman, believing absolutely in only one thing—himself, and he founded Islam. Calvin, Luther, St. Bernard, Hildebrand, all were men of one idea, allowing of no *Ifs* and *Buts* to qualify. That was the secret of their strength. It is the

convex glass that kindles a fire, not that which is even."

"The narrow can only influence the ignorant."

"The narrow will always influence the bulk of men, for the bulk of mankind is ignorant, not perhaps of the three R's, but of the compensating forces which keep the social and political systems from flying to pieces."

"Thank heaven, Julia, the country is not in the hands of fanatics to whirl her to destruction."

"How long will it remain so? There are plenty of hot-brained Phaethons who think themselves capable of driving the horses of the sun, and who have not yet learned to control themselves. To my mind, Lamerton, our class is the fly-wheel that saves the watch from running down at a gallop, and marking no progress at all. In the chronometer the balance-wheel is made up of two metals with different powers of contraction and expansion, one holds the other in check, and produces equilibrium. The wheel oscillates this way, that way, and acts as a controlling power on the mainspring and modifies the action of the wheels. Our class is so constituted with its double character, is so brought into relation with all parties in politics, is so associated with every kind of interest in the country, that it is swung this way, that way, is kept in perpetual vibration, and acts as an effective regulator on the violent forces in the political and social world—forces confined, and strong because confined, forces which keep the machine going, but which uncontrolled would wreck it."

"I dare say you are right, Julia, I have no doubt the social classes are all as, and where they ought to be, superposed as geologic strata, but wonderfully contorted, it must be allowed, in places. To change the subject—what have you said to Arminell about that fellow for whom she pleaded?"

"Samuel Ceely?"

"Yes, that is his name."

"He is a poor creature," said Lady Lamerton, "a cripple."

"If I remember right he was a scamp at one time and got into one or two scrapes, but what they were, 'pon my soul, I do not remember."

"He is harmless enough now," said Lady Lamerton. "I have him on my list of those for whom I pay into the shoe-club, and the clothing club, the blanket and the coal clubs. The rector's wife said it was a pity he should miss the advantages, which he must do, as he is too poor to pay, and he needs them more than many who receive them. So I have him on my list of those for whom I pay. I have told Arminell that he can work in the glen. That requires to be done up, it has been neglected for so many years. The paths and the summer-house, the benches, the waterfall, are all out of order. Giles may like to play there. Arminell will pay the man out of her allowance, it is her own wish. And now, Lamerton, I also will change the subject, and that to one which I am not sure I ought to mention on a Sunday. I am glad for one thing, that we do not go to town for the season, as it will enable us to show some civility to the country people, the squires and the parsons. Really, when we have the house full of our friends, we cannot do it, the groups do not amalgamate, they have so few subjects in common. I have thought of a garden-party for Wednesday week. You will mind and make no engagements for that day."

"I will book it—to be at home on Wednesday week." Lord Lamerton seated himself, and the light of his wife's reading lamp fell on his face.

"Are you not feeling well?" she asked. "You look pale, dear."

"It is nothing," he replied. "I may have caught a slight chill in the avenue, as no doubt the dew is falling, and there are no clouds in the sky. The night is very still and lovely,

Julia. No—I think not—no, I cannot have been chilled there. I do not know what it is. Well—I will not say that either. To tell you the whole truth, I am worried.”

“Worried? About what?”

“I am uneasy, for one thing, about Arminell. She has got queer fancies in her head. Giles also is not well; and there is something further—in itself nothing, but though a trifle it is distressing me greatly.”

“What is it?”

“The leaders of my choice pines, which I had planted about the grounds, have been maliciously cut off. The thing has been done out of spite, and to hurt me, and yet the real sufferers are yet unborn. A hundred years hence these trees would have been admired for their stateliness—and now they are mutilated. I shall be dead and forgotten long before any tree I have put in comes to size. I am pained—this has been aimed at me, to wound me. I fear this has been done because I have refused to allow my house to be undermined.”

“Who can have done it?”

“I do not know. If I did know, I would not prosecute. That is one of the privileges of our privileged class—to bear injuries and impertinences without resentment. I am hurt—I am hurt greatly. The matter may be a trifle”—his lordship stood up—“but—after all I have done for the Orleigh people—it does seem unkind.”

Lady Lamerton put out her hand, and took that of her husband. “Never mind,” she said; “he who did it will come to regret it.”

“The injury does not touch the Lamertons alone,” said his lordship; “we throw open the park and gardens every Saturday to the public, and we allow Bands of Hope, and Girls’ Friendly Societies, and Choirs, and all sorts of agglomerations of men to come here and picnic in our grounds and strew them with sandwich papers and empty ginger-

beer bottles, and cut their initials on the park gates and trees. A century hence the trees that have been mutilated would have grown into magnificence, and overshadowed heaven knows what—political, social or religious holiday-taking companies and awkward squads.”

“Put in some more pines, next autumn.”

“What with rabbits and the public, planting is discouraging work. It costs a lot of money, and you get no satisfaction from it. My dear Julia, it is one of the privileges—no—drawbacks of our class, that we expose a wide surface to the envious and the evil-disposed. They can injure us in a thousand ways, whereas our powers of self-protection are unduly limited. If we try to save ourselves, we do ourselves injury, as pigs when swimming cut their own throats with their fore-claws.”

“Never mind that. Whom shall we invite—or rather, whom must we omit? I must send out cards of invitation to our garden party at once.”

“O, bother the garden party,” said his lordship wearily. “You and I hardly ever get a quiet evening together, so now that we have one, let us forget the world outside and some of these exacting and embarrassing duties we owe it. Really, I envy those who, belonging to a less conspicuous sphere, have their cosy evenings at home, their privacy and peaceful joys. We are forced to live in publicity, we have to fill our house with guests, lay ourselves out to entertain them, keep a French cook for them—I am sure boiled mutton and caper sauce would content me,—stock our cellars for them, keep hunters and preserve the game for them. Upon my word, Julia, we are not suffered to live for ourselves. A selfish existence is with us impossible. No monks or nuns ever gave up half so much, and lived so completely for others, continually sacrificing their own pleasures, leisure, thoughts, time, to others,—as we, the British aristocracy.”

"You are out of spirits to-night, Lamerton." His wife retained his hand, and pressed it.

"Then," continued his lordship, following his own train of thought, and not answering his wife's remark, perhaps because he did not hear it, so full was his mind of the topic then uppermost in it, "then, Julia, consider—we are mounted specimens; like those unfortunate worms in sour paste, and monsters in a drop of dirty water, we were shown by lime-light and a magnifying glass the other evening at the National School, projected on a white sheet. The whole room was crowded, and the bumpkins in the place sat gazing as the lecturer pointed to the wriggling creatures, named each in succession, and described it. What must have been the discomfort to those animals, if in any degree sensitive, to be exposed, stared at, glared through, commented on! and—consider—the lecturer may have misinterpreted them, because misunderstanding them, and they listened to it all, squirmed a little more painfully, but were incapable of setting him to rights. The German princes are entitled *durch-laucht*, that is, 'Transparencies;' and quite right. We also are transparencies, we worms of the aristocracy, monsters of privilege, held up before the public eye, magnified, projected on newspaper sheets, characterised sometimes aright, more often wrongly, forced to have every nerve in our system, every pulsation in our blood, every motion in our brains, every moment in our lives, and every writhe of our bodies and spasm of our hearts commented on by the vulgar, and brutally misunderstood. It is rather hard on us, Julia. There are other worms in the sour paste of life, other monsters in the drop of dirty water we call Society, who are at liberty to turn about, and stretch themselves, bound or coil as they list; only we—we must live and wriggle between two plates of glass, illuminated and made translucent by the most powerful known light, denied that privilege which belongs to the humble—opacity."

"Is it the injured pines that have put you out of spirits to-night, Lamerton?" asked my lady, stroking the hand she held.

"Did you ever read about Matthew Hopkins, the witch-finder?" asked his lordship, with a fluttering smile on his lips. "He brought many poor harmless creatures to a violent end. Every suspected witch was stripped and closely examined for a mole, a wart, for any blemish,—and such blemishes were at once declared to be the devil's seals, stamping the poor wretches as his own. Then they were tied hand and foot together, and thrown into the water; if they sank they were pronounced innocent; if they floated they were declared guilty and were withdrawn from the water to be delivered over to the fire. We, Julia, are treated in a way not unlike that pursued by Matthew Hopkins; and there are ten thousand amateur witch-finders searching us, tearing off our clothes, peering after defects, chucking us into the water or the fire. If we are found to have moles, how we are probed with lancets, and plucked with tweezers, and then we are cast to the flames of public indignation and democratic wrath. If, however, we are found to have no moles about us, if we give no occasion for scandal, then away we are pitched into the water, and down down we sink in public estimation, and chill disregard, as coroneted nonentities."

Lady Lamerton continued to caress her husband's hand.

"Then again," he continued, after a short silence, "the witches were tortured into confession by sleeplessness. They were seated on uncomfortable stools, and watched night and day. If they nodded, their soles were tickled with feathers, cold water was poured down their backs, or pepper was blown up their noses. As for us, it is the same, we are not allowed to live quietly, we are forced to activity. I am kept running about, giving prizes at school commemorations, taking seat on committees, laying foundation-

stones, opening institutions, attending quarter sessions, throwing wide my doors to every one, my purse to a good many; I am denied domesticity, denied rest. I am kept in perpetual motion. I have a title, that means every one else has a title to bully me. I am tickled into energy if I nod, or the pepper of journalistic sarcasm is blown into my eyes and nose to stir me to activity. Julia, a rich merchant, or banker, or manufacturer, a well-to-do tradesman lives more comfortably than do we. In the first place they can do what they will with their money—but we have to meet a thousand claims on what we get, and are grudging the remnant we reserve for our individual enjoyment. Next, they are not exposed to ruthless criticism, to daily, hourly comment, as we are. They are free, we are not; they can think first of themselves, afterwards of others, whereas we have to be for ever considering others, and thrusting ourselves into corners, thankful to find a corner in which we may possess and stretch our individual selves. Upon my soul, I wish I had been born in another order of humanity, without title, and land, and a seat in the Upper House, and—and without manganese.”

“If it had been so—”

“If it had been so, then I could have enjoyed life, stuck at home, and seen more of you, and Arminell, and dear little Giles, and then—why then, I would have had no enemies.”

Lord Lamerton had reseated himself when he began to talk of Matthew Hopkins, the witch-finder. Now he stood up again.

“Julia,” he said, “those Douglas pines had made noble shoots—it is a pity. I shall go to bed, and dream, if I can, that I am lying in clover and not over a bunch of manganese.”

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. JAMES WELSH.

MRS. SALTREN had informed Arminell that she had a brother who was a gentleman. The term "gentleman" is derived from the Latin *gens*, and signifies a member of a patrician family. But this is not the signification now given it in the vernacular. On the tongue of the people, a gentleman and a lady are those who do no manual labour. A man informs you that he will be a gentleman on a bank-holiday, because he will lounge about with his hands in his pockets, and an old woman who has weeded turnips at ninepence a day, becomes a lady when rheumatism invades her limbs, and sends her to the union.

Mr. James Welsh, the brother of Mrs. Saltren, was a gentleman in this, that he belonged to a *gens*, a class not ancient or aristocratic, but modern, and one that has obtained considerable influence, wields much power and is likely to become dominant—we mean that of the professional journalist and politician. He was a gentleman also in this, that he did no hard manual labour, but few men worked harder than he, but then he dirtied his hands with ink only.

Along the coasts of Scotland and Sweden are terraces raised high above the sea-level, which are pronounced by geologists to be ancient beaches. At one time the waves washed where now sheep graze, and deposited sea-weed and shells where now grow heather and harebells. There are these raised sea-beaches in man, to which conscience at one

time reached, where it formed a barrier, and whence it has retreated. But we are wrong in speaking of the retreat of the sea, for actually the level of the ocean is permanent, it is the land which rises, and as it rises leaves the sea below. And so perhaps it is with us. We lift ourselves above old convictions, scruples, principles, and the sometimes sleeping, sometimes tossing sea of conscience no longer touches those points they once fretted. Do we congratulate ourselves on this elevation? Perhaps so, and yet few of us can contemplate the raised beaches left in our hearts by the retiring waves of conscience without a sigh, and a doubt.

Mr. James Welsh said and wrote and did many things as a public journalist and a professional politician which as a boy or young man he would have looked upon as dishonest, false, and mischievous. His conscience no longer troubled him in his business, but in home relations he was blameless.

Perhaps one reason why the sea-level alters with us, is that we are always endeavouring to reclaim land from it, thrusting our sea-walls of self-interest further out, to take in more field from being overwashed. We make our line of conscience co-terminous with our line of self-interest. Outside this line the waves may toss and roar, within they may not cast a flake of foam, or waft a breath of ozone. How much thunder and buffet we permit outside our sea-wall of self-interest against any rock or sand-bank that stands unenclosed! but we only suffer the water of self-reproach to sweep with a shallow swash and soothing murmur the outside of the bank we have cast up.

What excellent words those are to conjure with and wherewith blind our own eyes as well as those of others—Political Party and the Public Weal! We regard ourselves as devoted to the *respublica*, when, in reality, we care only for our private interests; and our zeal for the public good is hot or cold according as our dividends are affected.

If we can show that the welfare of our party can be

advanced by making out our neighbour to be a thief and assassin, with what pious energy do we set to work to invent lies to defame him. How we suppress and disguise facts which make against our pet doctrines! To what subterfuges and tricks do we have recourse to colour those facts which cannot be suppressed to make them look the opposite to what we know them to be!

It is really deserving of note how every dirty and dishonourable act is wrapped about with a moral sanction, as a comfit with a motto in a cracker.

We always profess to be actuated by noble and disinterested motives, and yet they are generally mean and personal. Our ancestors regarded the planets only so far as they by their conjunctions and interferences with each other's houses affected the constitutions and careers of these ancestors of ours. Jupiter is 1250 times larger than the earth, and has seven moons, and this planet with its moons revolves and illumines the sky to affect the spleen of Master Jack Sparrow and disturb the courtship of Mistress Jenny Wren. Jupiter is distant five hundred millions of miles from Jack and Jenny—but what of that? According to Euclid a straight line can be drawn between any two given points, accordingly between the planet at one end and these little nobodies at the other, lines exist. Now all people actually do draw invisible lines between themselves and every other object in heaven and earth, and contemplate these objects along these lines, and value and despise them according as these objects affect them along these lines.

The author was travelling in a second-class railway-carriage on that memorable Monday morning after the Phoenix Park tragedy that thrilled all England with horror and rage. Facing him, sat a gentleman reading his paper, who ever and anon slapped his knee, and exclaimed, "Famous! Splendid! Nothing better could have happened!" Presently, unable to understand these exclamations, the

author asked, "Sir! do you mean to say that you approve of the crime?"

"Oh, no!" was his answer. "Certainly not, but, consider how it will make the papers sell! I have shares in one or two."

The writer was talking the other day to a timber merchant on the condition of Ireland. "I trust," said he, "that the Plan of Campaign will not be suppressed as yet. We can buy Irish oak at fourpence a foot just now."

The writer was discussing the annexation of Alsace with a native farmer. "Well," said he, "when we belonged to France I sold for a franc what I now sell for a mark, *therefore*, God save Kaiser Wilhelm." "But," was objected, "probably you now have to pay a mark for what formerly cost you a franc." He considered for a moment, and then said, "That is true, *vive la France!*" Twopence turned his patriotism this way to Berlin, or that way to Paris. He was a German when selling, a Frenchman when buying, all for twopence.

The professional politician is a man who lives by politics as the professional chess-player lives by chess. He acquires a professional conscience. His profession has to fill his pockets and find bread for his children, and politics must be kept going to do so. The chess-player sacrifices pawns to gain his end. The stoker shovels on coals into the furnace to make his engine gallop; and the electrician pours vitriol into the battery to produce a current in his wires. They have none of them the slightest scruple in doing these things—they belong to the business, and the professional politician has no scruple in playing with facts, and throwing them away as pawns in his game, or of exciting the passions and prejudices of men, or of using the most biting and corroding acid in his endeavours to evoke a current of feeling. When an organist desires to produce a noise, he pulls out stop diapason, and dances on the pedals. The pro-

fessional politician deals with the public in the same way ; that is his instrument. What in the organ are the pedals for but to be kicked, and the keys but to be struck, and the stops but to be drawn out, and what are the social classes but the manuals, and the individuals composing them, but the keys, and the grudges, greed, ambition, envy, and prejudices but the stops, which a clever player understands to manipulate ?

Mr. Welsh was a worthy man, eminently respectable, a good husband, and a kind friend. He was truthful, honest, reliable in his family and social relations, but professionally unscrupulous. The sea-line stood in its old place on one side of his character, but on another a wide tract, that tract on which he grew his harvest, had been reclaimed from the waves of conscience. It is so with a good many others besides Mr. Welsh, and in a good many other trades and professions than journalism and politics. We are conscientious in every department except that of money making, and in that we allow of tricks and meannesses, which we excuse to ourselves as forced on us by the exigencies of competition. Recently Mr. Welsh had been slightly indisposed, so he came from town into the country, on a holiday, to spend the Sunday with his sister, and then run on to see a congenial friend in a town in the same county.

In the afternoon he took a stroll by himself in the woods, smoking his pipe, and always with an eye to business, looking about him for material for an article.

"Halloo !" said Mr. Welsh, halting in front of the ruinous cottage of Patience Kite. "What have we here? Does any one inhabit this tumble-down concern?"

He went to the door and looked in.

Patience faced him.

"What do you want? Who are you? This is my house, and I will not be turned out of it."

She took him for a sanitary officer, or a lawyer, come to enforce her expulsion.

"This is a queer hole for a lady to occupy as her boudoir," said Mr. Welsh, taking his pipe out of his mouth. "I wouldn't care for this style of thing myself except as a drawing copy. Not to become a hero of romance, or to give my experience in a magazine article would I sleep under that chimney on a stormy night."

"Nobody has invited you," said Patience, blocking her door.

"And pray, madam, whose house is this? Is this the sort of cottage my lord provides for his tenants?"

"The house is mine."

"Copyhold or freehold?"

"I pay ground rent for it of two shillings; it is mine for life, and then it falls to his lordship."

"I should expect it would fall altogether to you shortly. Why don't you do it up?"

"How can I? I am poor."

"I suppose that you are bound by the terms of the lease to maintain the house in repair?"

"I dare say. The agent, Mr. Macduff, has threatened me; but no one can make me do it when I haven't a shilling. You can't make one dance who is born without legs."

"Then, properly, this house belongs to his lordship. Why does not he do it up? I can make something out of this! A Day in the Country, something to fill a column and a-half in a Monday morning paper. Contrast his lordship's princely residence with the ruins in which he pigs his tenants. Compare Saltren's place, Chillacot, which is his own, all in spic-and-span order, with this, and then a word about the incubus of the great holders on the land, and the advantage of the enfranchisement of the soil. It will do. And so, madam, they have tried to evict you?"

"Yes; the sanitary officer ordered me to leave; the

Board of Guardians went to the magistrates, and issued a summons to me to quit, and my lord has sent Mr Macduff to me, to threaten proceedings against me if I will not put the house in repair or quit it. But what can they do when I won't budge, and could prosecute 'em if they laid fingers on me? The police daren't touch me. They've come and looked at me and argued, but they can't force me to leave."

"So his lordship wants to evict you, eh?"

"Mr. Macduff has declared he'll send masons and strip the roof, and pull down the chimney, and rebuild the walls, but they can't do it without driving me out first, and that is more than they can with me having the house as my own for life."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Welsh, "it's a case—a poor widow, I suppose you are a widow; it doesn't matter if you are not; it sounds best—a widow, a victim to his lordship's tyranny—tearing down the roof that shelters her grey head, casting down her chimney, desecrating her hearthstone, the sacred penates, with the foot of violence—or hoof, which shall it be? By George! I'll make something out of it, harrowing to the feelings, and as rousing as tartaric acid and soda! Who cares for a contradiction or a correction? We can always break the lines and make nonsense of it, and lay the blame on the printer, if called to task. I'm glad I came here for a Sunday. You will let me inside, I suppose, ma'am, to cast an eye round; particulars are so useful in a description, lend such a *vraisemblance* to an account."

But Mrs. Kite's tumble-down cottage was not the only material Mr. Welsh collected for use on that Sunday. He heard from Saltren about the stoppage of the manganese.

"Something can be made out of that," said Welsh. "We are in want of a grievance. Tell me the particulars, I'll sift out for myself what will serve my purpose."

When he had heard all, "It will do," said he, "there has been nothing to interest the public or stir them up since

the last divorce suit in high life. High life!—so high that some folks had to hold their noses. We want a bit of a change now. After that bit of strong venison, some cap-sicum to restore the palate. Saltren, you must convene a public meeting, make a demonstration, a torchlight procession of the out-of-work, issue a remonstrance. I'll come and help you. I know how to work those kind of things. A little grievance and some dissatisfaction well-stirred together is like chlorate of potash and sulphur in a mortar; only stir away, and in the end you get an explosion."

"It is of no use," said the captain, in a tone of discouragement.

"Of no use! I tell you it is of the utmost use; we'll make a public matter of it. Get a question asked in the House about it. There are so many journalists in there now that we can get anything asked when we want the question as a text for a leader. Why, we will fill the papers with your grievance, only we must have some meeting to report, and I'll help you with that. Bless you, I've half a dozen ways of poking this matter into notoriety; and we will show up the British aristocracy as the oppressors of the poor, those who are driving business out of the country, who are the true cause of the prevailing depression. Thanks to that recent divorce case we've made them out to be the moral cancer in the body of old England, and now we shall show that they are the drag on commercial progress. When folks are grumbling because the times are bad, it makes them mighty content to be shown a cause for it all, on which they may vent their ill-humour. Did you ever read 'The Curiosity Shop,' Saltren? Quilp had a figure-head to batter whenever things went wrong with him, and the public are much like Quilp; give 'em an admiral or a peer, or an archbishop, some figure-head, and whack, bang, hammer, and smash they go at it."

"As for the aristocracy," said Mrs. Saltren, "I ought to

know them. I combed their hair, and hooked their dresses, and unpacked their portmanteaus; and them as do that are best qualified to know them, I should think."

"I don't mind telling you," said the captain, addressing his brother-in-law, "that their doom is sealed in heaven. I've had it revealed to me."

"You have, have you?" asked Welsh in a tone of irony, which, however, Saltren did not perceive.

"Yes, I have—you shall hear. I would not tell every one, but I tell you. I was in the spirit this very morning, and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Saltren, Saltren! Then I looked, and behold there came flying down to me, a book from heaven, written within and without. I held up my hands to receive it; but it fell past me into the water, and I stooped and looked thereon, and saw written 'The Gilded Clique,' and again the voice cried, 'It is fallen, it is fallen!'"

"You don't expect me to gulp that——" Welsh checked himself, and added, shaking his head—"I can't, I'm afraid, make copy of that."

"It is true," said Saltren earnestly. His vehemence, his kindled eyes, his deepened colour, showed his sincerity. "Would I dare in such matters to utter lies? I am but a poor mean instrument, but what of that? Prophets have been found among shepherds, and apostles taken from their fishing nets. I was engaged in heartfelt prayer when this took place."

"You didn't happen to fall asleep whilst occupied in devotion, of course?" said Welsh, with a contemptuous jerk of the chin. "Such a weakness is not likely to befall you."

"I was not asleep," answered Saltren sternly. "How could I be asleep, when my eyes were open, and I saw the book; and my ears, and they heard the voice?"

"You didn't happen to get hold of the book, and see the name of the publisher?"

"No—I was unable. It was unnecessary. I read the title plainly. I saw what was on the cover of the book."

"I can do nothing with this," said Welsh, leaning back in his chair, stretching, and closing his hands behind the back of his head. "This belongs to another department altogether. You had better relate your experiences at the next revival-meeting among the horse-marines, there is no knowing what effect it may have upon that intelligent and excitable body of men."

"It is true," urged Saltren again, frowning.

He was incapable of seeing that his brother-in-law was bantering him. The man was absolutely without sense of humour; but he saw that Welsh did not believe in his story, and this irritated and offended him. That his tale as he told it, grew in its proportions and became more and more unreal, was also what he did not know. His mind worked on the small materials it had, and spun out of them a fable in which he himself implicitly believed.

"I don't dispute what you have narrated," said Welsh composedly. "I know you are a total abstainer, so it is not to be accounted for in the way which comes naturally uppermost. Still, I've heard of wonderful elevation of spirits and general head-over-heeledness after an over-dose of non-alcoholic effervescing liquors."

"I had touched nothing," said Saltren, with his temper chafed. "If you doubt me——"

"But I do not doubt you," interrupted Welsh. "I tell you that this does not interest me, because it is outside my department, like Bulgaria, and the Opera Comique, and Inoculations for Hydrophobia, and Primitive Marriage. I don't meddle with the Eastern Question, or review historical works, or sermons, or novels. I leave all that to other fellows; you must pass this on to the chap who does religion, not that I think he would make copy out of it for a magazine article, except under the head of Hallucinations."

CHAPTER XV.

REVELATIONS.

"Now look straight for'ard," said Mr. Welsh, "and distinguish. You call this affair of yours and the book—a revelation. There are revelations, my friend, that may be written with a capital R, and others that have to begin with a small cap."

Mr. Welsh was not particular about the English he spoke, but he wrote it well, at least passably.

"The sort of revelation that suits me, one with a capital R, is that at which a shorthand reporter assists. That's the sort of revelation we get in the courts—that is, as the French say, *contrôlé*. But on the other hand comes your hole-and-corner revelation, which has more given it than is its due when written with a little *r*. No reporter, no public present, totally uncontrolled; that sort of revelation is no use to me. I don't mean to say but that sort of thing may go down at revivals, but for the press it is no good at all."

"Am I likely to have imagined it? What should have put the thought of 'The Gilded Clique' into my head?" asked Saltren angrily. "I tell you I believe in this revelation as I believe that I see you before me."

"Gilded Clique!" repeated Welsh, "I can't say, but Gaboriau's criminal novel may have fallen under your eyes."

"What is that?"

"A French novel with that title. It has been translated."

"Now see!" exclaimed Captain Saltren, kindling, springing up, and waving his arms, "I never have set eyes on such a book, never heard of it before. But nothing that you could have said would have confirmed me in my conviction more than this. It shows that the devil is active, and that to draw away attention from, and to weaken the force of my revelation, he has caused a book to be circulated under the same name. I should not be surprised if you told me it had a blood-red cover."

"It has one."

"There!" cried Saltren, "now nothing will ever shake my faith. When the devil strives to defeat the purposes of Heaven, it is because he fears those purposes. My solemn and sincere conviction is——" He lowered his voice, but though low it shook with emotion. "My belief is that the book I saw was the Everlasting Gospel. John saw an angel flying in heaven having that book in his right hand, but it was not then communicated to man. The time was not ripe. Now, at last, towards the end of the ages, that book has been cast down, and its purport disclosed."

"You didn't happen to see the angel?" asked Welsh sneeringly.

"I—I am not sure, I saw something. Indeed, there no doubt was an angel flying, but my eyes were blinded with the extraordinary light, and my mind has not yet sufficiently recovered for me to recollect all the particulars of the vision. But this I can tell you, for I know it. Although I did not get hold of the book, its contents are written in fire in my brain. That book of the Everlasting Gospel declares that the age of privilege is at an end, the distinctions between rich and poor, noble and common, are at an end. This has been hidden from the world, because the world was not ready to receive it. Now the time is come, and I am the humble instrument chosen for announcing these good tidings to men. I care not if, like Samson, I be crushed as I take

hold of the pillars, and bow myself, and bring the House of Lords down."

"Well," said Welsh, "if you can work that line in the chapel, well and good. I keep to my province, and that is the manganese. Why, Condyl's fluid, I fancy, is permanganate of potash—I can lug that in somehow."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Saltren, who was becoming impatient at having been left out of the conversation, "at the park they thought a deal about Condyl's fluid."

"I can manage it in this way," said her brother, rubbing his hands. "That disinfectant has manganese as a constituent. His lordship, by stopping the manganese mine, cuts off a source of health, a deodorising and disinfecting stream from entering the homes of sickness, and the haunts of fever. Who can say how many lives may be sacrificed by the stopping of Wheal Julia? I'll bring in Condyl's fluid with effect. What else is manganese used for?"

"Bleaching, I believe," said Mrs. Saltren.

"Ah!" said Mr. Welsh, "that can be worked in also, and I'll pull old Isabelle of Castile in by the ears as well. She vowed she would not change her smock till a certain city she was besieging had capitulated, and as that city held out three months, judge the colour of her linen. We are all, I presume, to wear Isabelle shirts—or rather cuffs and collars—and use Isabelle sheets and towels, and eat off Isabelle tablecloths, and the ministers of the Established Church to preach in Isabelle surplices, because, for sooth, the supply of manganese is withheld wherewith to whiten them."

"Well, it does seem wrong," said Mrs. Saltren.

"And then," continued her brother, kindling with professional enthusiasm, "after that divorce case, too, when the noble lords and ladies washed their dirty linen in public. You can figure how it will all work out. Here is my Lord Lamerton knows that the titled aristocracy have so much

dirty linen at home, that he is determined to prevent the British public from wearing bleached linen at all, lest they should perceive the difference. There is nothing," continued Welsh, with a chuckle, "nothing so convenient for one's purpose as well mixing one's hyperboles and analogies, and drawing just any conclusions you like out of premises well muddled up with similitudes. We know very well, my dear Marianne, that the bread we buy of the bakers is composed of some flour, and some alum, and some plaster-of-paris, and some china-clay, but we don't stop to analyse it at our breakfast; we cut ourselves a slice, butter it, and pop it into our mouths, and like it a thousand times better than home-made bread made of pure, unadulterated flour. It is just the same with political articles and political speeches. There's a lot of stuff of all sorts goes into them besides the flour of pure reason. And the British public don't analyse, they swallow. What they consume they expect to be light and to taste agreeably—they don't care a farthing what it is made up of."

Mr. Welsh took out his pocket-book, and dotted down his ideas. "Of course," said he, talking and laughing to himself, "we must touch this off with a light hand in a semi-jocose, and semi-serious manner. There are some folks who never see a joke, or rather they always see it as something grave. They are like earth-worms—all swallow."

Mr. Welsh put up his knee, interlaced his fingers round it, and began to swing his knee on a level with his chest.

"If you want to rouse the British public," he said, "you must tickle them. You can't do much with their heads, but their feelings are easily roused. Heads!—why there was no getting wisdom out of the head of Jupiter, till it was clove with an axe, and you would not have the skull of the British public more yielding than that of the king of the gods." He put down his leg that he had been hugging. "My dear sister," he went on, "I know the British public,

it is my business to study it and treat it. I know its moods, and it is one of the most docile of creatures to drive. There is one thing it loves above anything, and that is a sore. Do you remember how Aunt Susan had a bad leg, and how she went on about that leg, the pride she took in it, the medicines she swallowed for it, and how she hated Betsy Tucker because she also had a bad leg, and how she contended that hers was the worst, the most inflamed, and caused her most pain? It is so with the public. It must have its sore ; and show it, and discuss it, and apply to it quack plasters, and drink for it quack draughts. What would the doctors do but for the Aunt Susans and Betsy Tuckers—their fortunes stand on these old women's legs. So is it with us—we live by the bad legs of the nation. The public, in its heart of hearts, don't want those precious legs to be healed—certainly not to be taken off. What we have to do is to keep the sores angry with caustic, and poked with needles. And that is just why I want this manganese now, to rub it into the legs of the public and wake the sores up into irritation once more."

Then Welsh began to whistle between his front teeth and swing his foot again.

"The public," he continued, "are like Job on a dunghill, rubbing its sores. The public has no desire to have the dunghill removed ; it rather likes the warmth. When it nods off into a nap then we stick the prongs of the fork into it, and up it starts excited and angry, and we turn the heap over under its nose, and then it settles down into it again deeper than before."

"I confess I do not know much about the public," said Mrs Saltren, resolved to have a word ; "but when you come to the aristocracy, why then you are on my ground."

"On your ground," laughed Welsh, "because you were lady's maid at the Park ; that is like the land surveyor claiming a property because he has walked over it with a chain."

"At all events the surveyor knows it," said Mrs. Saltren, with some spirit, "perhaps better than does the owner."

"I admit that you have me there," laughed her brother.

"And," said Mrs. Saltren, "it is pounds on pounds I might have earned by sending information about high life to the society papers; but I was above doing that sort of thing; besides, the society papers were not published at that time. Sometimes there were as many as a dozen or fourteen lady's-maids and as many valets staying in the house with their masters and mistresses, and they were full of the most interesting information and bursting to reveal it, like moist sugar in a paper-bag."

"I'll tell you what it is," said Welsh, "servantdom is becoming a power in the country, just as the press has become. There is no knowing nowadays where to look for the seat of power; it is at the other extremity from the head. In old times the serfs and slaves were not of account at all, and now their direct representatives hold the characters and happiness of the best in the land in their hands. The country may have at one time been directed by its head; it is not so now, like a fish, it is directed and propelled by its tail. The servant class at one time was despised, now it is feared; it mounts on its two wings, the divorce court and the society press. What opportunities it now has of paying off old grudges, of pushing itself into notoriety, of earning a little money. This is the age of the utilisation of refuse. We find an employment for what our forefathers, nay, our fathers, cast aside. The rummage of copper mines is now burnt for arsenic, the scum of coal-tar makes aniline dyes, and I hear they are talking of the conversion of dirty rags by means of vitriol into lump sugar. It is so in social and political life—we are using up our refuse, we invest it with preponderating political influence, we chuck it into the House of Commons, and right it should be so; give every

thing a chance, and in an age of transformation we must turn up our social deposits. If it were not so, life would be a donkey-race with the prize for the last."

"When I was companion to her ladyship," began Mrs. Saltren, but was cut short by her brother—

"I beg your pardon, Marianne, when was that? I only knew you as lady's maid."

"I was more than that," said Mrs. Saltren flushing.

"Oh, of course, lady without the maid."

"I might, I daresay, have been my lady, and have kept my maid," said Mrs. Saltren, tossing her head, "so there is no point in your sneers, James. You may be a gentleman, but I am a captain's wife, and might have been more."

"Oh, indeed, and how came you not to be more?"

"Because I did not choose."

"In fact," said Welsh, "you thought you were in for a donkey-race. By George, you have got the prize!"

"You are really too bad," exclaimed Mrs. Saltren, vexed and angry; "I could tell you things that would surprise you. You think nothing of me because I am not rich or grand, and have to do the house work in my home; but I have been much considered in my day, and admired, and sought. And I have had my wrongs, which I thought to have carried with me to my grave, but as you choose to insult me, your sister, with saying I came in last at a donkey-race, I will tell you that properly I ought to have come in first."

"And I," said Saltren, standing up, "I insist on your speaking out." He had remained silent for some time, offended at his brother-in-law's incredulity, and not particularly interested in what he was saying, which seemed to him trifling.

"Let us hear," said Welsh, with a curl of his lips. He had no great respect for his sister. "You must let me observe in passing that just now you did not come in first

because you wouldn't, and now, apparently, it is because you weren't allowed."

"I have no wish," said Marianne Welsh, not noticing the sneer, "to make mischief, but truth is truth."

"Truth," interposed Welsh, who had the family infirmity of loving to hear his own voice, "truth when naked is unpresentable. The public are squeamish, and turn aside from it as improper; here we step in and frizzle, paint and clothe her, and so introduce her to the public."

"If you interrupt me, how am I to go on?" asked Mrs. Saltren, testily. "I was going to say, when you interrupted with your coarse remarks, that at one time I was a great beauty, and I don't suppose I've quite lost my good looks yet; and I was then very much sought."

"And what is more," said Welsh, "to the best of my remembrance you were not like a slug in a flower-bed, that when sought digs under ground."

"I tell you," continued Mrs. Saltren, with heightened colour, "that I have been sought by some of the noblest in the land."

Welsh looked out of the corners of his eyes at his sister, and said nothing.

"I was cruelly deceived. A great nobleman whom I will not name—"

"Whose title is in abeyance," threw in Welsh.

"Whom I will not name, but might do so if I chose, obtained a licence for a private marriage, and a minister to perform the ceremony, and there were witnesses—the nuptials took place. Not till several days after did I discover that I had been basely deceived. The licence was forged, the minister was a friend of the bridegroom disguised as a parson, and not in holy orders, and the witnesses were sworn to secrecy."

"That is your revelation, is it?" asked James Welsh. "I write it with a small cap, and in pica print."

"It is truth."

"The truth dressed, of course, and not in tailor-made clothes. I dress the truth myself, but—let me see, never allow of so much margin for improvers."

Then Welsh stood up.

"I must be off, Marianne, if I am to catch the train. Saltren, keep the manganese in agitation ; I will be with you and set your meeting going. Marianne, I can make no more of your revelation than I can of that disclosed by your husband. Facts, my dear sister, in my business are like the wax figures in Mrs. Jarley's show. They are to be dressed in the livery of our political colours, and it is wonderful what service they will do thus ; but, Marianne, you can't make the livery stand by itself, there must be facts underneath, it matters not of what a wooden and skeleton nature, they hold up the garments. I can't say that I see in what you have told me any supporting facts at all, only a bundle of tumbled, theatrical, romantic rubbish."

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW SALTREN TOOK IT.

MRS. SALTREN, as already said, as Marianne Welsh, had been good-looking and vain, when lady's-maid to the dowager Lady Lamerton, the mother of the present lord. She had never been in the Park with Arminell's mother, as she had pretended. She had been lady's-maid only to the dowager, and had left her precipitately and married Saltren a year before the marriage of my lord. She had been vain, and thought much of; her good looks were gone, her vanity had not departed with them. Her vanity had been wounded by the loss of her husband's esteem. She had harboured anger against him for many years because of his fantastic ideas, and straight-laced morality. No one is perfect, she argued, and Saltren, who pinned his religion on the Bible, ought to have been the first to admit this. The just man falleth seven times a day, and she had tripped only once in forty-two years—over fifteen thousand days. If she could but raise the veil and look into her husband's past life, argued she, no doubt she would see comical things there. What if she had tripped? Were not the ways of the world slippery? Did she make them slippery? Had she created the world and set it all over with slides? And if a person did slip, was it becoming of such a person to lie whimpering where she had fallen? Did not that show lack of spirit? For her part, after that slight lapse, she had hopped on her feet, shaken her skirts, and warbled a tune.

It is a fact patent to every one, that the further we recede from an object, the smaller it appears. For instance, the dome of St. Paul's when we stand in St. Paul's Churchyard, looks immense. But as we stand on Paul's Wharf, waiting for a steamer, we always discover that the small intervening distance has diminished the dome to the size of a dish-cover. As we descend the river, the cupola decreases in proportion as we widen our distance from it, till it is reduced to an inconsiderable speck, and finally sinks beyond the range of our vision. It is precisely the same with our faults. At the moment of their commission, from under their shadow, they look portentous and actually oppress us ; but they become sensibly reduced in bulk the farther we drift down life's stream from them. What immeasurably weighed on us yesterday, measurably burden us to-day, and to-morrow are perceptible ; but the day after cease to discomfort us. Not so only, but as we draw further from our past fault, we look back on it with a sort of fond admiration, tinged with sadness ; we lounge over the bulwarks of our boat, opera-glass in hand, and consider it as we consider the dome of St. Paul's, as an adjunct not altogether regrettable in the retrospect ; for, consider how uniform, how insufferable would be the landscape, without breaks in the sky line.

Now Mrs. Saltren was embarked on the same voyage with Stephen, her husband, and naturally expected that the same object which at one moment had obscured their sun, but which rapidly diminished in size and importance and signification to her eyes, should equally tend to disappear from his. When, however, she found that it did not, she was offended, and harboured the conviction that she was herself the injured party. Why were not Stephen's eyes constituted as the eyes of other men ? She had good occasion to take umbrage at the perversity of his vision. She had admitted at one time, faintly, and with a graceful curtsy, a pretty apology, and with that reluctance which a

woman has to confess a fault, that her husband had been an injured man ; but now, after the lapse of over twenty years, their relative positions were reversed. The cases are known of girls who have swallowed packets of needles. These needles inside have caused at first uneasiness and alarm for the consequences ; but when they gradually, and in succession, work out, some at the elbows, some at the finger ends, some at the nose, and in the end come all away, they cease to trouble, and become a joke. It is so with our moral transgressions. When committed, they plunge us in an agony of remorse and fear ; but gradually they work out of us, point or head foremost, and finally we get rid of them altogether. Now Marianne Welsh and Stephen Saltren had swallowed a packet of needles between them, and they were all her needles which had entered him. She did not retain hers long, but as they worked out of her, they worked into him and transfixed his heart, which bristled with them, like a christening pin-cushion. This, of course, was particularly annoying to her. To forgive and to forget is a Christian virtue, and Saltren, she argued, was no better than a heathen, for all his profession, because he neither forgot nor forgave.

When Mrs. Saltren made the announcement to her brother and husband, that a cruel fraud had been committed on her, she had acted without premeditation, stung to the confession by her galled vanity at her brother's disrespectful tone, and with an undefined, immatured desire of setting herself to rights with her husband.

The story had been contemptuously cast back in her face by James Welsh ; and it was with some surprise and much satisfaction, that she saw her husband ready to accept it without question. Captain Saltren had not offered to accompany his brother-in-law to the station, which was four miles distant ; he could hardly wait with patience his departure. No sooner was Welsh gone, than Saltren

grasped his wife's arm, and said in his deepest tones, "Tell me all, Marianne, tell me all!"

"I ought," said Mrs. Saltren, recovering herself from the confusion which she felt, when her brother ridiculed her story, "I ought at this day to wear a coronet of diamonds. I was loved by a distinguished nobleman, with ardour. I cannot say I loved him equally; but I was dazzled. His family naturally were strenuously opposed to our union; but, indeed, they knew nothing at all about it. He entreated me to consent to have our union celebrated in private. He undertook to obtain a special licence from the Archbishop. How was I to know that my simplicity was being imposed upon? I was an innocent, confiding girl, ignorant of the world's deceit; and extraordinarily good-looking."

"And you did not reckon on the wickedness of the aristocracy. Go on."

But Marianne paused. She was not ready to fill up the details, and to complete her narrative without consideration.

"Do not keep me in torture!" protested Saltren; his face was twitching convulsively.

"How could I help myself?" asked Marianne. "It was not my fault that I had such an exquisite complexion, such abundant, beautiful hair, and such lovely eyes; though, heaven knows, little did I know it then, or have I thought of, or valued it since. My beauty is, to some extent, gone now, but not altogether. As for my teeth, Stephen, which were pearls—I had not a decayed one in my jaws then; but after I married you they began to go with worry, and because you did not trust me, and were unkind to me!"

"Marianne," said Saltren, "you deceived me—you deceived me cruelly. You told me nothing of this when I married you."

"I was always a woman of delicacy, and it was not for

me to speak. I had been deceived and was deserted. Only when too late did I find how wickedly I had been betrayed, and then, when you came by and found me in my sorrow and desolation, I clung to your hand ; I hoped you would be my consolation, my stay, my solace, and I—I——” She burst into tears. “I have been bitterly disappointed. I have found you without love, churlish, sullen, holding me from you as if I were infected with the plague, not ready to clasp me as an unhappy, suffering woman, that needed all the love and pity you could give.”

“Not one word did you tell me of all this. You let me marry you in unsuspection that before you had loved another.”

“Not at all, Stephen,” she said, “I have already assured you that I did not love the man whom I so foolishly and unfortunately trusted.”

“Why have you not told me this story long ago? Why have you left me in the dark so long?”

“Your own fault, Stephen, none but yours. If you had shown me that consideration which becomes a professing Christian, I might have been encouraged to open my poor, tired, fluttering heart to you ; but I was always a woman of extreme delicacy, and very reserved. You, however, were distant, and cold, and jealous. Then my pride bade me keep my tragic story to myself.”

Saltren stood before her with folded arms, his hands were working. He could not keep them still but by clasping them to his side. “I was just, Marianne!” he said. “Just, and not severe to judge. I judged but as I knew the facts. If I was told nothing, I knew nothing to extenuate your fault. You were young and beautiful, and I thought that perhaps you had not strong principles to guide you. Now that you have told me all, I allow that you were more sinned against than sinning ; but I cannot acquit you of not entrusting me before this with the whole truth,”

"You never asked me for it."

"No," he answered sternly. "I could not do that. It was for you to have spoken."

Then, all at once, Saltren began to tremble; he took hold of the window-jamb, and he shook so that the diamond panes in the casement rattled. He stood there quivering in all his limbs. Great drops formed and rolled off his tall forehead, hung a moment suspended on his shaggy brow and then fell to the ground. They were not tears, they were the anguish drops expressed from his brain.

Mrs. Saltren looked at him with astonishment and some trepidation. She never had comprehended him. She could not understand what was going on in him now,

"What is it, Stephen?"

He waved his hand. He could not speak.

"But, Stephen, what is it? Are you ill?"

Then he threw himself before her, and clasped her to him furiously, with a cry and a sob, and broke into a convulsion of loud weeping. He kissed her forehead, hair, and lips. He seized her hands, and covered them at once with tears and kisses.

"Marianne!" he said at last, with a voice interrupted and choked. "For all these years we have been divided, you and I, I and you, under one roof, and yet with the whole world between us. I never loved any but you—never, never any; and all these long years there has been my old love deep in my heart, not dead, but sleeping; and now and then putting up its hands and uttering a cry, and I have bid it go to sleep again and lie still, and never hoped that the trumpet would sound, and it would spring up to life once more. But why did you not tell me this before? Why did you hide from me that you were the sufferer, you the wronged? If you would have told me this, I would have forgiven you long ago. My heart has been hungering and crying out for love. I have seen you every day, and

felt that I have loved you, felt it in every vein. To me you have not grown old, but have remained the same, only there was this shadow of a great darkness between us. I constrained myself, because I considered you had sinned against God and me, and were unworthy of being loved !”

Again he drew her head to his shoulder, laid it there, and kissed her, and sobbed, and clasped her passionately.

“Marianne ! Let him that is without guilt cast the first stone. I forgive you. Tell me that you loved me when I came to you asking you to be mine.”

“I did love you, Stephen—you and you only.”

“And that other ; he who—” he did not finish the sentence—a fresh fit of trembling came on him.

“I never did love him, Stephen. Only his title and his position impressed me. I was young, and he was so much my superior in age, in rank, in strength ; and the prospect opened before me was so splendid, that a poor, young, trustful, foolish thing like me—”

“You did not love him ?” Stephen spoke with eagerness.

“I have assured you that I never did.”

“Oh the age that we have spent together under one roof, united yet separated ; one in name, apart in soul ; years of sorrow to both of us ; years of estrangement ; years of disappointed love, and broken trust, and embittered home—all this we owe to him !”

Marianne felt his heart beating furiously, and his muscles contracting spasmodically in his face, that was against hers, in his breast, in his arms.

Has it ever chanced to the reader to encounter a married couple blind to each other's faults, and these faults glaring ? One might suppose that daily intercourse would have sharpened the perception of each other's weaknesses, but instead of that it blunts it. They cannot detect in each other the grotesque, the ugly, the false, that are conspicuous

and offensive to everyone else. Love, it is, which has softly dropped the veil over their eyes, or withdrawn from them the faculty of perceiving in each other these blemishes which, if perceived, would make common life unendurable. Love is well painted as blind, but the blindest of all loves is the love of the married. In the case of the Saltrens the blindness was on one side only, because on his side only was there true love. This had dulled his perception, so that he saw not the shallowness, untruthfulness, vanity, and heartlessness of Marianne, qualities which her brother saw clearly enough.

"You have borne your wrong all these years unavenged," he said. "My God! how I have misjudged you! One word more, Marianne." He disengaged himself from her. He had been kneeling with his arms enfolding her; now he released his hold, and knelt, bolt-upright, with his hands depending to the floor, gaunt, ungainly, motionless. "Marianne," he said, slowly, "I know so much that I must be told all. I must know the rest." He paused for full a minute, looking her steadily in the face, still kneeling upright, stiffly, uncouthly. "Who was he?"

Marianne did not speak. Now in turn agitation overcame her. Had she gone too far with this story, true or false?

She raised her hands deprecatingly. What would the consequences be?

Then, all at once, with a shriek rather than a cry, Saltren leaped to his feet.

"You need not say a word. I know all now, all—with-out your telling me. You were in the Park at the time with the old Lady Lamerton, and—and you had the boy named after him."

Had there been light in the room, it would have been seen how pale was the face of Mrs. Saltren, but that of her husband, the captain, had turned a deadlier white still.

"It all unfolds before me, all becomes plain!" he cried.
"I wondered whose was the head I saw on the book."

"On what book, Stephen?"

"I feared, I doubted, but now I doubt no more. It was his likeness!"

"What book do you mean?"

"The book of the Everlasting Gospel which I saw an angel carry in his right hand, flying in the midst of heaven; and he cast the book down, and the book was dipped in blood; and when it fell into the water, the water was turned to blood, as the river of Egypt when Israel was about to escape."

The door flew open, and Giles Inglett Saltren entered, wearing a light coat thrown over his evening dress. As he came in he removed his hat.

Captain Saltren turned on him with flashing eyes, and in his most sonorous tones said, as he waved him away: "Go back, go back whence you came. You have no part in me. You are not my son. Return to him who has cared for you: to him who is your father—Lord Lamerton."

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW JINGLES TOOK IT.

GILES INGLETT SALTREN stood motionless, his hat in one hand, with the other holding the door, looking at the captain. No lamp had been lighted in the room since the sun had set, and he could only see his father's face indistinctly by the pale evening sky light cast in through the window and door. But he would have known from the tones of his father's voice that he was profoundly moved, even if he had not caught the words he uttered. At first, indeed, he was too surprised to comprehend the full force of these words; but, when their significance became clear to him, he also became moved, and he said gravely :

“This must be explained.”

“What I said is quickly explained,” answered the captain; and he rose to his feet.

Does the reader remember a familiar toy of childhood composed of pretty birds, with feathers stuck in them, strung on horsehair or wires so as to form a sort of cage, but with this difference, that the cage did not contain the birds? When this toy was set down, all the little figures quivered slowly, uncertainly, to the bottom, and when it was reversed, the same process was repeated. It was so with the captain's speech. His words were threaded on the tremulous strings of his vocal organ, and not only quivered from a high pitch down, but also went up from a low one with much vibration on high. A voice of this quality is provocative of sympathy ;

as, when a violincello string is touched, a piano chord trembles responsive. Such voices make not the voices, but the hearts of other men to tremble. I know a slater who, when I am ordering of him slates, brings tears into my eyes by asking if I will have "Duchess" or "Rag."

"My words are quickly explained," said Stephen Saltren. "I have never regarded you as my son—have never treated you as such. You know that I have shown you no fatherly affection, because I knew from the beginning that not a drop of my blood flowed in your veins. But never, before this evening, have I allowed you, or any one else, to suspect what I knew, lest the honour of your mother should suffer. Now, and only now, has the entire truth been disclosed to me. I did not suspect it, no, not when you were christened and given the name you bear. I thought it was a compliment paid through a fancy of your mother's to the family in which she had lived, that was all. A little flickering suspicion may have been aroused afterwards, when his lordship, to save you from consumption, sent you abroad; but I put it angrily from me as unworthy of being harboured. I had no real grounds for suspicion; since then it has come up in my heart again and again, and I have stamped down the hateful thought with a kind of rage and shame at myself for thinking it. Only to-night has the whole story been told me, and I find that your mother was not to blame—that no real dishonour stains her—that all the fault, all the guilt, lies on and blackens—blackens and degrades his soul!"

"I did not mean to say—that is, I did not wish—" began Mrs. Saltren, in a weeping, expostulating tone.

"Marianne, say nothing." Captain Saltren turned to her. "It is not for you to justify yourself to your child. The story shall be told him by me. I will spare you the pain and shame."

"But, mother," said Jingles, shutting the door behind

him and leaning his back against it, "I must be told the whole truth. I must have it at least confirmed by your lips."

"My dear,"—Mrs. Saltren's voice shook—"I would not make mischief, for the world. I hate above everything the mischief-makers. If there be one kind of people I abhor it is those who make mischief; and I am, thank heaven, not one of such."

"Quite so," said her son, gravely; "but I must know what I have to believe, for I must act on it."

"Oh, my dear, do nothing! Let it remain, if you love me, just as if it had never been told. I should die of shame were it to come out."

"It shall not come out," said Giles; "but I must know from your lips, mother, whether I am—I cannot say it. My happiness, my future depend on my knowledge of what my real parentage is. You can understand that?"

"Well, then, it is true that you are not Stephen Saltren's son, and it is true that I was a shamefully-used and deceived woman, and that I had no bad intentions whatever. I was always a person of remarkable delicacy and refinement above my station. As for who your father was, I name no names; and, indeed, just now, when the captain asked me, I said the same—that I would name no names, and so I stick to the same resolution, and nothing more shall be torn from me, not if you were to tear me to pieces with a chain harrow."

"Come without," said the captain, "and you shall hear from me how it came to pass. We must spare your mother's feelings. She was not in fault, she was wickedly imposed on."

Then the mining captain moved to the door; Giles Inglett opened it, and stood aside to allow his reputed father to go through; then he followed him and shut the door behind them.

Half an hour passed. Mrs. Saltren remained for some minutes seated where she had been, consoling herself with the reflection that she had named no names; and that, if mischief came of this, the fact would attach to Saltren, not to her. A little while ago we said that love was blind, hymeneal love most blind; but blind with incurable ophthalmia, blindest of all blindness, is self-love.

Mrs. Saltren rose and went about her domestic affairs.

"No one can charge me," said she, "with having kept my house untidy, or with having left unmended my husband's clothes. To think of the cartloads of buttons I've put on during my married life! It is enough to convince any but the envious. Well, it is a comfort that Stephen has been brought to his senses at last, and come to view matters in a proper light. I've heard James say that there is a nerve goes from each eyeball into the brain, and afore they enter it they take a twist about each other, and, so coupled, march in together. And James said if it were not so we should see double, and neither eye would agree with the other. I mind quite well that he said this one day when I was complaining to him that Stephen and I didn't get on quite right together. He said we'd get our twist one day and then see all alike. What he said is come true; leastways, the proper twist has come in Stephen. Thank God, I always see straight."

She went to a corner cupboard and opened it.

"Now that Stephen is gone," she said, "I'll rinse out the glass James had for his gin-and-water. Saltren is that crazy on teetotalism that he would be angry if he knew I had given James any, and angry to think I kept spirits in the house; and because he is so stupid I'm obliged to put it in a medicine-bottle with 'For outward application only' on it, and say it is a lotion for neuralgia. It is a mercy that I named no names, so my conscience is clear. It is just as in Egypt, when there was darkness over all the land, the

Israelites had light in their dwellings. I thank goodness I've always the clearest of light in me."

She removed the tumbler and washed it in the back kitchen.

"When one comes to consider it, after all, Stephen isn't so very much out in his reckoning. When does a nobleman take a delicate lad out of a school and send him to a warm climate because his lungs are affected, and then give him scholarship and college education, without having something that makes him do it? Are there no other delicate lads with weak lungs besides Giles? Why did not his lordship send them to Bordighera? Are there no other clever young fellows in national schools besides my boy, to be taken up and pushed on? There must have been some reason for my lord selecting Giles. Was it because I had been in service in the house? Other young women out of the Park have married and had children, but I never heard of my lord doing anything for their sons. None of them have been sent to college and made into gentlemen except my boy. But then I was uncommonly good-looking, that is true, and not another young hussey at the Park was fit to hold a candle to me. Though, the Lord knows, I never set store on good looks. If it pleases his lordship to treat Giles almost as if he were a son, he has a right to do so, but he must take the consequences. I don't interfere with the fancies of others, but if any one chooses to do a queer thing, he must expect to have to answer for it. I have no doubt that his lordship has frequently wished he had a son, such a fine and handsome fellow as my Giles, and for some years he was without any son of his own to inherit his title. There was only Miss Arminell. Anyhow, no responsibility attaches to me, whatever may be said. No one can blame me. His lordship ought never to have taken notice of Giles, never to have had the doctor examine his lungs, and, when told that the

boy would die unless sent to the south of France, he should have said, 'He is the son of poor parents, who can't afford the expense, so I suppose he must die.' No one could have blamed him, then. And when Giles came back—better, but still delicate, and not suited to do hard work—my lord should not have sent him to school and college, and taken him in at Orleigh Park as tutor to his son—he should not have done any of these things unless he had made up his mind to take the consequences. Scripture says that no man sets down to build a tower without having first counted the cost. It is not at all unlikely that folks will say queer things, and I know for certain my husband thinks queer fancies about my boy and Lord Lamerton; but who is to blame for that? If his lordship didn't want to make it thought by all the world that Giles was his son, all I can say is, he shouldn't have done for him what he did. It is not my place to stop idle talk. I'd like to know whether it is any woman's duty to run about a parish correcting the mistakes made by the gossiping tongues therein. I thank heaven I am not a gadabout. I do my duty, washing, and ironing, and mending of waistcoats, and sewing on of buttons, and darning of stocking-feet, and baking of meat-dumplings, and peeling of potatoes; that is what my work is, and I do it well. I don't take upon me the putting to rights of other folks when in error. Every one stands for himself. If you cut the wick crooked you must expect your chimney-glass to get smoked, and, if Lord Lamerton has snipped his wick askew, he must look out for fish-tails."

Mrs. Saltren removed her petroleum lamp-glass, struck a match, and proceeded slowly to light her lamp.

"I remember James telling me once, how that he had been in France, I think he called it La Vendée, where the fields are divided by dykes full of stagnant water; and one of the industries of the place is the collecting of leeches.

The men roll up their breeches above the knee and carry a pail, and wade in the ditches, and now and again throw up a leg, and sweep off two, three, or it may be a dozen leeches from the calf into the pail. Then they wade further, and up with a leg again, and off with a fresh batch of leeches. I haven't been in a big house, and seen the ways of the aristocracy, and not found out that they are waders in leech dykes, and that it is as much as they can do to keep their calves clear, and their blood from being sucked out of them altogether. Now what I want to know is, if a starved leech does bite, and suck and swell, and is not wiped off and sent to market, but gets reg'lar blown out with blood, hasn't that leech a right to say that he has in him the blood of the man to whom he has attached himself? I'd ask any independent jury whether my Giles Inglett has eaten and drunk more at Saltren's expense, or at that of his lordship, whether he does not owe his very life to his lordship as much as to me, for he'd have died of decline, if he had not been sent to the South? And if he owes his life to Lord Lamerton equally as he does to me, and has been fed and clothed, and educated by him and not by Saltren. why then, like the leech, he can say he has the blood of the Lamertons in him. That is common sense. And again—bother that lamp!"

Mrs. Saltren in place of turning the wick up, had turned it down, and was obliged to remove the chimney and strike another match.

"And then," she continued, "if Lord Lamerton has not chose to wipe him off into the pail, who is to blame but himself? If he choose to keep his leg in a leech pond, there's neither rhyme nor reason in my objecting; and he has no claim to cry out. Put Giles on a plate, and sprinkle salt on him, and whose blood will come out? Any one can see he is a gentleman! He has imbibed it all, his

manners, his polish, his knowledge, everything he has, from Lord Lamerton and others ; all the world can see it."

Then in came the young man about whom she was arguing with herself. He could not speak so great was his agitation, but he went to his mother, and threw his arms about her, clasped her to his heart, and kissed her. For some time he could not say anything, but after a while he conquered his emotion sufficiently to say —

"Oh, my mother—my poor mother ! Oh, my dear, my ill-used mother !" and then again his emotions got the better of him. "I cannot," he said, after a pause, with a renewed effort to govern himself, "I cannot say what I shall do now, I cannot even think, but I am sure of one thing, I must remain no longer at the Park."

"My boy !" exclaimed Mrs. Saltren. "Fall off yourself into the plate and salt !"

"I do not understand," said he. She left him in his ignorance ; she had been thinking of the leeches.

"My dear Giles ! Whatever you do, don't breathe a word of this to any one."

"Mother, I will not, you may be sure of that."

"Not to Lord Lamerton above all—not for heaven's sake."

"Least of all to him."

"I should get into such trouble. Oh, my gracious !"

"Mother, dear," the young fellow clasped her to his heart again, "how inexpressibly precious you are to me now, and how I grieve for you. I can say no more now."

Then he went forth.

"Why, bless me !" exclaimed Mrs. Saltren. "He never was so affectionate before. Well, as far as human reason goes, it does seem as if all things were being brought to their best for me ; for this day has given me my husband's love and doubled that of my son."

Giles Inglett Saltren walked hastily back to the Park.

On his way he encountered Samuel Ceely, who put forth his maimed hand, and crooked the remaining fingers in his overcoat to arrest him, as he went by.

"What do you want with me?" asked Jingles impatiently.

"I should be so glad if you would put in a word for me," pleaded the old man.

"I am engaged—I cannot wait."

"But," urged old Ceely, without letting go his hold, "Joan has axed Miss Arminell for a scullery-maid's place for me. Now I'd rather have to do wi' the dogs, or I could keep the guns beautifully clean, or even the stables."

"I really cannot attend to this!" said Jingles impatiently.

"I have other matters of more importance now on my mind; besides, my influence is not what—" he spoke bitterly—"what it should be in the great house."

"You might do me a good turn, and speak a word for me."

"The probability of my speaking a good word for you, or any one, to Lord Lamerton, or of doing any one a good turn in Orleigh Park, is gone from me for ever," said Giles.

"You must detain me no longer—it is useless. Let me go."

He shook himself free from the clutch of the old man, and walked along the road.

After he had gone several paces, perhaps a hundred yards, he turned—moved by what impulse was unknown to him—and looked back. In the road, lit by the moon, stood the cripple, stretching forth his maimed hand after him, with the claw-like fingers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW ARMINELL TOOK IT.

GILES INGLETT SALTREN walked on fast, he was disturbed in the stream of his thoughts by the interruption of the tiresome old cripple. He had more important matters to occupy his mind than the requirements of Samuel Ceely. His heart beat, his hands became moist. What a marvellous disclosure had been made to him—and he wondered at himself for not having divined it before. He argued much as did his mother. Why had Lord Lamerton done such great things for him, why had he sent him abroad, found him money, given him education, lifted him far above the sphere in which his parents moved, unless he felt called to do so by a sense of responsibility, such as belongs to a father?

To a whole class of minds disinterested conduct is inconceivable. All such conduct as is oblique is to them intelligible, and allowance is made by them for stupidity, and stupidity with them is the same thing as unselfishness. But such unselfishness is permissible only by fits and lapses from the course which all men naturally take. But that men should act consistently on disinterested motives is an idea too preposterous for them to allow of its existence.

This class of minds does not belong specially to any particular stratum of society, though it is found to be most

prevalent where the struggle for existence is most keen, and where there is least culture.

But of culture there are two kinds, that which is external, and that which is within: it is generally found that this inability to understand disinterested conduct is found everywhere where the inner culture does not exist.

There is, we believe, a Rabbinic legend concerning a certain cow which was its own calf, and much disputation ensued among the Talmudists, to determine the point of time at which the cow calved itself, and when it ceased to be accounted beef, and became veal, or the contrary. But what seems to us Gentiles to be impossible in the material sense, is possible enough in the spiritual realm, and a very calf-like self may become the mother of a cow-self, so vast, so considerable that, like the Brahminic cow, Varuna, it will occupy the entire firmament, extend to the horizon on all sides, and overshadow and envelope everything. Varuna in fact is the universe, and as we see and exist in that universe, so with the cow-self born of calf-self, it becomes our universe. We see only that cow, inhale the breath of that cow, think only cow thoughts, stand on cow, and our aspirations are limited on all sides by cow. That cow is Self born of self. The breath of that cow is sweet to our nostrils, its milk the nourishment of our bowels, its low is music to our ears, and nothing that does not smell and taste and sound of that cow is worthy of being smelt, and tasted, and listened to.

Of this cow we can give information unattainable by the Rabbis. We can watch its development, if we cannot determine the moment of its nativity. It probably comes to the birth at an early age, but there is this deserving of consideration about it that this cow born of calf can be bled to whiteness, and knocked on the head if taken in time.

If, however, it be allowed to attain to heiferhood, it is

thenceforth unmanageable : we see everything through its medium, and like and dislike, love and hate all objects and persons as they stand within or without of the compass of the great cow-self, which has become our Varuna, our universe.

It must not be supposed that such as live under the shadow of this great cow, are oppressed by it. On the contrary they have become so accustomed to it that they could not exist apart from it. There is a story of a man who carried a monstrous cow on his shoulders, and explained that he had acquired the ability to do so by beginning with the creature when it was a day old. As the calf grew, so grew his ability to support its weight. It is the same with us, we carry the little calf-self about on our shoulder, and dance along the road and leap over the stones, and as day by day the calf grows, so does our capacity for carrying it, till at last we trudge about everywhere, into all society, even into church, with the monstrous cow-self on our shoulders, and do not feel that we have anything weighing on us whatsoever.

Now Giles Inglett Saltren had grown up nursing and petting this calf. He had good natural abilities, but partly through his mother's folly, partly through external circumstances, he had come to see everything through a medium of self. The notice taken of him by his schoolmaster because he was intelligent, by Lord Lamerton because he was delicate, the very stethoscoping of his lungs, the jellies and grapes sent him from the great house, the petting he got in the servants' hall, because he was handsome and interesting, the superiority he had acquired over his parents by his residence abroad, and education, all tended to the feeding and fattening of the calf-self ; and the cod-liver oil he had consumed, had not merely gone to restore his lungs, but to build up piles of yellow fat on the flanks of self. Jingles had already reached that point at which his cow had be-

come Varuna, his entire universe. He thought of, considered, nothing from any other point of view than as it touched himself.

His consciousness of discomfort in the society of Orleigh, his bitterness of mood, his resentment of the distinctions not purposely made, but naturally existing and necessarily insuperable, between himself and those with whom he associated, all this sprang out of the one source, all came of the one disease—intense, all-absorbing, all-prevailing selfishness.

He observed the natural ease that pervaded all the actions of those with whom he was brought into contact in the upper world, and their complete lack of self-consciousness, their naturalness, simplicity, in all they said and did. He had not got it—he could not acquire it, he was like a maid-of-all-work from a farmhouse on a market day in the county town wearing a Mephistopheles hat on her red head, and ten-button gloves on her mottled arms. He was conscious of his self-consciousness—he feared it would be remarked. It made him suspicious and envious and angry. He could not reach to the ease of those above him, and therefore he desired to level them to his own plane. A man with black blood in his veins is fearful lest those at the table should look at his nails. Jingles was ever dreading lest some chance glance should discover the want of breed in himself.

This caused him much misery ; and this all came of his carrying about the cow-self with him into my lady's boudoir, and my lord's study, to the dining-room, and to the parlour.

I was at the autumn fair some years ago at Liège ; on the boulevards were streets of booths, some for the sale of cakes and toys, others shows ; but, as among the stalls those for cakes prevailed, so among the shows did the Rigolade Parisienne preponderate.

Not having the faintest conception of what the Rigolade was, I paid my sou and entered one in quest of knowledge ;

and this is what I saw—a series of mirrors. But there was this peculiar about the mirrors, one was convex, and in it I beheld my nose reduced to a pimple, and my eyes to currants ; another was concave, in which my nose swelled to a proboscis and my eyes to plums. A third mirror multiplied my face fifty times. A fourth showed me my face elongated, as when my MS. has been returned “not suited,” from an editor ; a fifth widened my face to an absurd grin ; in a sixth I saw my pleasant self magnified in serene and smiling beauty in the midst, and showed me every surrounding person and object, the faces of men, the houses, the cathedral, the sky, the sun, all distorted out of shape and proportions. “Eh ça, M’sou,” said the showman, “c’est la véritable Rigolade Parisienne.”

Eh ça—my dear readers, was Giles Inglett Saltren’s vision of life. He saw himself infinitely magnified and everything else dwarfed about him and tortured into monstrosity.

Of one thing I am very certain, dear reader, in this great Rigolade of life into which we have entered, and through which we are walking, there are some who are always seeing themselves in the multiplying mirror, and there are others who contemplate their faces continually elongated, whilst others again see themselves in the widening mirror and accommodate themselves to be the perpetual buffoon. Let us trust that these are not many, but there certainly are some who view themselves enlarged, and view everything and every person beside, the world about them, the heaven above them, in a state of distortion.

Lord Lamerton had shown the young tutor extraordinary kindness, for he was a man with a soft heart, and he really wished to make the young fellow happy. He would have liked Giles to have opened out to him and not to have maintained a formal distance, but he was unable to do more than invite confidence, and he attributed the stiffness of

the tutor to his shyness. Of late, his lordship had begun to think that perhaps Jingles was somewhat morbid, but this he attributed to his constitutional delicacy. Consumptive people are fantastical, was his hasty generalization.

In the heart of Giles Inglett Saltren a very mixed feeling existed as he walked back to the park. He was gratified to think that he had noble blood in his veins, but he was incensed at the thought of the treachery to which his mother had fallen a victim, and which robbed him of his birthrights. Had that function in the drawing-room, described by his mother, been celebrated legally, he and not the snivelling little Giles would be heir to Orleigh, to fifty thousand a year, and a coronet, and a seat in the House of Lords. What use would Giles the Little make of his privileges? Would he not lead the same prosaic life as his father, planting pines, digging fish-ponds, keeping a pack of hounds, doing the active work of a county magnate and magistrate?—whereas he—Giles Inglett Saltren, no longer Saltren, but Baron Lamerton of Orleigh, might become, with the advantages of his birth, wealth, and abilities combined, the greatest statesman and reformer England had known. He felt that his head was bursting with ideas, his blood on fire to give them utterance, and his hands tingling to carry his projects into effect. Without some adventitious help, such as position and wealth could give, he could not take the place he knew by inner illumination should be his.

“I was sure of it,” said Jingles, “that is to say I imagined that I could not be the son of a common mining captain. There was something superior to that sort of stuff in me. But now this infamous act of treachery stands between me and acknowledgment by the world, between me and such success as, perhaps no man in England, except perhaps Mr. Gladstone, has attained to. All I want is a lift on the

ladder—after that first step I will mount the rest of the way myself.”

He walked on fast. His blood seethed in his heart. He was angry with Lord Lamerton for having betrayed his mother's trust, and with his mother for allowing herself to be deceived.

“Something may yet be done. It is not impossible that I may discover what has not been suspected. I must discover this friend who pretended to be a parson, and search the archiepiscopal registers for the alleged licence. It is hardly likely, that my lord would dare to fabricate a false licence, or for a friend of his to run the risk, out of friendship, of twenty-five years' penal servitude. No—it is, calmly considered, far more likely that a true licence was obtained, that the marriage though secret, was valid, and that my mother was imposed upon, when assured she had been duped, and then she was forced on Captain Saltren to dispose of her securely against discovering her rights and demanding them. I will go to town and then take advice what to do. It will, perhaps, be best for me thence to write to his lordship and ask for the particulars, threatening unless they are furnished me voluntarily, that I will search them out for myself. If I were the Honourable Giles Inglett,” mused Jingles, with his eyes on the moonlit road, “how utterly different my position in the house would be to what it now is. That confounded butler—who assumes a patronising air, and would, if I gave him encouragement, pat me on the shoulder. That impudent valet, who brought me up the wrong waistcoat yesterday morning, and allowed me to ring thrice before he chose to answer the bell, and never apologised for having kept me waiting. Then, again, at table the other day, when something was said of fish out of water, the footman touched my back with the dish of curried prawns. He did it intentionally, he meant that I was a fish out of water, a curried prawn myself, in fiery heat. There was something said among the gentlemen about Gammon, the

man who has just been created High Sheriff. He made his money in mines. One of those present said that those fellows who scramble into society for which they are not qualified always reminded him of French poodles, half-shaven and half-savage; every one laughed and the laugh cut me like knives. I am sure several at the table thought of me, and that they have taken to calling me 'the French poodle.' What am I? I am either his lordship's legitimate but unacknowledged son—and if so I am shaved all over; but if I am as he would pretend, his bastard—I am half-shaved, and so half-shaved I must run about the world, laughed at, thought monstrous, pitied, a creature of aristocratic and plebeian origin commingled, with the hair about my neck, and ears, and eyes, and nose, but all the rest of me polished and cultured. A poodle indeed! I—a French poodle!"

A piece of decayed branch fallen from a tree lay in the road. Jingles kicked it away.

"That," said he passionately, "is what I should like to do to the butler, were I the Honourable Giles. And that," he kicked another stick, "is how I would treat that brute who allowed me to wait for my waistcoat. And so," he trod on and snapped a twig that lay athwart his path, "so would I crush the footman who dared to nudge me with the curried prawns! And," he caught a hazel bough that hung from the hedge, and broke it off, and ripped the leaves away, and then with his teeth pulled the rind away, "and this is what I would do to that man who dared to talk of half-shaved French poodles. Oh! if I could be but a despot—a dictator for an hour—for an hour only—to ram the curried prawns down the throat of that insolent ruffian who nudged me, and to flay alive that creature who spoke of poodles! Then I would cheerfully surrender my power into the hands of the people and be the democratic leader once more."

He entered the park grounds by a side-gate and was soon on the terrace. There he saw Arminell returning to the house from her stroll in the avenue.

"Mr. Saltren," she said, "have you also been enjoying the beauty of the night?"

"I have been trying to cool the fever within," he replied.

"I hope," she said, misunderstanding him, "that you have not caught the influenza, or whatever it is from Giles."

"I have taken nothing from Giles. The fever I speak of is not physical."

"Oh! you are still thinking of what we discussed over the Noah's Ark."

"Yes—how can I help it? I who am broken and trodden on at every moment."

"I am sorry to hear you say this, Mr. Saltren. I also have been talking the matter over with papa, and after he went in, I have been walking up and down under the trees meditating on it—but I get no farther, for all my thinking."

"Miss Inglett," said Jingles, "the time of barley-mows is at an end. Hitherto we have had the oats, and the wheat, and the rye, and the clover, and the meadow-grass ricked, stacked separately. All that is of the past. The age of the stack-yard is over with its several distinct classified ricks—this is wheat, that is rye; this is clover, that damaged hay. We are now entering an age of Silo, and inevitably as feudalism is done away with, so will the last relics of distinctions be swept aside also, and we shall all enter an universal and common silo."

"I do not think I quite understand you."

"Henceforth all mankind will make one, all contribute to the common good, all be pressed together and the individuality of one pass to become the property of all."

Arminell shook her head and laughed.

"I confess that I find great sweetness in the old stack-

yard, and a special fragrance attaches to each rick. Is all that to be a thing of the past, and the savour of the silo to be the social atmosphere of the future?"

"You strain the illustration," said Saltren, testily.

"You wish to substitute an aggregate of nastiness for diversified sweets."

"Miss Inglett, I will say no more. I thought you more sympathetic with the aspirations of the despised and down-trodden, with the movement of ideas in the present century."

"I am sympathetic," said Arminell. "But I am as bewildered now as I was this morning. I am just as one who has been spun through the spiral tunnel on the St. Gothard line, when one rushes forth into day: you know neither in which direction you are going, nor to what level you are brought. I dislike your similitude of a silo, and so have a right to criticise it."

"Arminell," said Jingles standing still.

"Mr. Saltren!" The girl reared herself haughtily, and spoke with icy coldness.

"Exactly," laughed the tutor, bitterly. "I thought as much! You will not allow the presumed son of a manganese captain, the humble tutor, to presume an approach of familiarity to the honourable the daughter of a peer."

"I allow no one to presume," said she, haughtily, and turned her back on him, and resumed her walk.

"Yet I have a right," pursued Jingles, striding after her. "Miss Inglett—Arminell, listen to me. I am not the man to presume. I know and am made to feel too sharply my inferiority to desire to take a liberty. But I have a right, and I stand on my right. I have a right to call you by your Christian name, a right which you will acknowledge. I am your brother."

Arminell halted, turned and looked at him from head to foot with surprise mingled with disdain.

"You doubt my words," he went on. "I am not offended—I am not surprised at that; indeed, I expected it. But what I say is true. We have different mothers, mine"—with bitterness—"of the people, that I allow—of the people, of the common, base lot, who are dirt under your feet; yours is of the aristocracy, made much of, received in society, in the magic circle from which mine would be shut out. But we have one father; I stand to you in precisely the same relation as does the boy Giles, but I am your elder brother, and should be your adviser and closest friend."

CHAPTER XIX.

LITTLE JOHN NOBODY.

GILES INGLETT SALTREN had promised his mother to say nothing to any one of what had been told him, but the temptation had come strongly upon him to tell Arminell that he was not the nobody she and others supposed, and he had succumbed in the temptation. He and the girl had interests in common, sympathies that drew them together, and he felt that it would be of extraordinary benefit to her, and a pleasure to himself, if, in that great house, where each was so solitary, they could meet without the barrier which had hitherto divided them and prevented the frank interchange of ideas and the communication of confidences. Later on in the evening, it is true, he felt some twinges of conscience, but they were easily stilled.

Jingles had greatly felt his loneliness. He had been without a friend, without even a companion. He could not associate with those of his mother's class, for he was separated from them by his education, and he made no friends in the superior class, from the suspicion with which he regarded its members. He had made acquaintances at college, but he could not ask them to stay at Chillacot when he was at the Park, nor invite them as guests to Orleigh; consequently, these acquaintanceships died natural deaths. Nevertheless, that natural craving which exists in all hearts to have a familiar friend, a person with whom to associate and open the soul, was strong in Jingles.

If the reader has travelled in a foreign country—let us say in Bohemia—and is ignorant of the tongue, Czech, he has felt the irksomeness of a *table d'hôte* at which he has sat, and of which he has partaken, without being able to join in the general conversation. He has felt embarrassed, has longed for the dinner to be over, that he might retire to his solitary chamber. Yet, when there, he wearies over his loneliness, and descends to the coffee-room, there to sip his *café noir*, and smoke, and pare his nails, and turn over a Czech newspaper, make up his accounts, then sip again, again turn over the paper, re-examine his nails, and recalculate his expenditure, in weariful iteration, and long for the time when he can call for his bill and leave. But, if some one at an adjoining table says, "Ach ! zu Englitsch !" how he leaps to eager dialogue, how he takes over his coffee-cup and cognac to the stranger's table ; how he longs to hug the barbarian, who professes to "speaque a littelle Englitsch." How he clings to him, forgives him his blunders, opens a thirsty ear to his jargon, forces on him champagne and cigars, forgets the clock, his nails, his notes, the bill and the train, in the delight of having met one with whom he can for a moment forget his isolation.

If this be so when meeting with a foreigner, how much more cordial is our encounter with a pleasant Englishman. We at once seek out links of connection, to establish the fact of our having mutual acquaintances.

So did the impulse come on Saltren and overpower him. There was a community of ideas between him and Arminell ; and he was swept away by his desire to find a companion, into forgetfulness of the promise he had made to his mother.

That he was doing wrong in telling the girl a secret, about which he had no right to let a hint fall without her father's knowledge and consent, could hardly be hid from his conscience, but he refused to listen, and excused himself on grounds satisfactory to his vanity. It was good for Armi-

nell herself to know the relationship, that she might be able to lean on him without reserve. Giles Inglett Saltren had been very solitary in Orleigh. He had not, indeed, been debarred the use of his mother-tongue; but he had been unable to give utterance to his thoughts; and of what profit is the gift of speech to a man, if he may not speak out what is on his mind? The young are possessed with eager desire to turn themselves inside out, and to show every one their internal organisation. A polypus has the same peculiarity. It becomes weary of exposing one surface to the tide, and so frankly and capriciously inverts itself, so that what was coat of stomach becomes external tissue, and the outer skin accommodates itself to the exercise of digestive functions. Young people do the same, and do it publicly, in society, in a drawing-room, in unsympathetic company. As we grow older we acquire reserve, and gradually withdraw our contents within ourselves, and never dream of allowing any other surface to become exposed to the general eye, but that furnished us by nature as our proper external envelope. The young tutor had his own crude, indigested notions, a mind in ferment, and an inflamed and irritable internal tissue, and he naturally and eagerly embraced the only opportunity he had of inverting himself.

Then, again, a still mightier temptation operated on Jingles, the temptation which besets every man to assume the *rôle* of somebody, who has been condemned to play the part of nobody, when an opening is given.

There is a poem in Percy's Reliques, that represents the grievances of the common Englishman at the time of the Reformation, who dislikes the change that is going on about him, the introduction of novelties, the greed that masqueraded under the name of religion; and every verse ends with the burden, "But I am little John Nobody, and durst not speak."

Jingles had been unable to express his opinion, to appear

to have any opinion at all ; he had been in the house, at table, everywhere, a little John Nobody who durst not speak. Now the *rôle* of little John Nobody is a *rôle* distasteful to every one, especially to one who has a good opinion of himself. Imagine the emotions of an actor who has been doomed for years to be a walking gentleman, to whom has been suddenly offered the part of Hamlet. Would he not embrace the chance with avidity ?

When Arminell approached Jingles with a not exactly, "Me speaque a littelle Englitsch !" but with the confession that she understood his mind, and was asking of life the same questions that troubled him, then he warmed to her and longed for a closer intercourse. When, moreover, he found that it was possible for him to establish a tie of a close and binding nature between them, it was more than his moral courage could resist to break the seal of silence and tell her who he was.

But Jingles had entered into no particulars, and Arminell could not rest with the half-knowledge she possessed. She could not ask him to tell her more, nor could she explain the circumstances. She could not endure to be kept in partial ignorance, and immediately after breakfast, on the following morning, she went to Chillacot to see Mrs. Saltren.

The captain's wife was greatly alarmed when she heard what was wanted. Arminell spoke coldly, distantly, haughtily. Mr. Giles Inglett Saltren, she said, had let drop some words that implied a relationship. She must know whether there were any foundations for the implication. Mrs. Saltren trembled and made excuses, and attempted evasions ; but Arminell was determined to know the facts, and she forced the woman to repeat to her the story she had told on the previous night.

"But, oh, miss ! I named no names ; and Giles never ought to have breathed a word about it. I will go down

on my knees to you to beg you to say nothing to any one about this matter."

"Do you suppose it is a subject I am likely to discuss—to Mrs. Cribbage, for instance? That I will talk freely of an affair which compromises the honour of my father?"

"There is scarce any one knows about it."

"Except my father, yourself, and your son."

"And the captain; but, miss, I beg you to bear witness that I named no names."

"I want to know no more, none of the details," said Arminell, "I only trust they may all be rolled up and cast away into oblivion."

She returned to the Park, went into the music-room and began to practise on the piano. She was able to do the mechanical work and think at the same time. She believed the story she had been told, not so much because Marianne Saltren had related it, as because Jingles so confidently believed it. He would never have spoken to her on the matter had he harboured the slightest shadow of doubt.

But the story was one on which her mind must busy itself. She began unconsciously to play Agatha's song "Leise, leise," from "Der Freischütz," and as she played, two tears rolled down her cheeks.

She had always regarded her father with respect as a man of principle and strict notions of honour, though she did not consider him as a man of ability. Now he appeared to her in a light that showed him guilty of conduct unworthy of a gentleman, inexpressibly base and cowardly. His behaviour towards her own mother had been bad, for Arminell was satisfied that her mother would never have married Lord Lamerton had she been allowed to suspect that his character was stained with such an ugly blur.

"I am glad she died," said the girl with a sob, and then with a start she asked, "How was it that that woman was in the house with my mother? How could she bear it?"

No ; my dearest mother knew nothing, had no suspicions, and it was generous of Mrs. Saltren to be so near, and never let her suspect what had been done to her."

She shook her head to shake out the conjectures that distressed her. It was a pity she did put these questions from her. Had she looked at them more closely she would have seen the incoherence in the story told her by Marianne. Then the same thought occurred to her which had presented itself to Jingles. Was it not possible that the marriage with the servant-maid had been a valid one, but that advantage had been taken of her ignorance to make her believe it was not, and so for Lord Lamerton to shake himself free from an encumbrance which had become irksome to him? But if this were the case, her own mother's marriage would be of questionable legality, and with it would go her own—Arminell's—legitimacy. A cold terror came over the girl at the thought. By all means Jingles must be induced to desist from investigating the matter and pressing his rights, if he had any. What a condition of affairs would ensue if the marriage of Marianne were a real one. Why the present Lady Lamerton would not be a proper wife, nor little Giles legitimate any more than herself.

Arminell was young, had no practical knowledge of the world, and her imagination had been fed by novels, not of the most wholesome quality. Such an incident, such a hideous entanglement involving so many was quite in accordance with romance, and the young are always expecting reality to take romantic lines, as the old are always mistrusting the romantic as the garb of falsehood.

Arminell leaned her elbow on the music-stand, and her head in her palm. She felt faint and sick at the thought that had risen up in her.

At that precise moment Giles Inglett Saltren came into the room. He had heard the sound of the piano, and he

knew that the girl spent an hour every morning in the music-room practising. She looked up, recovered her distracted thoughts, and resumed her mechanical play on the keys.

"Do you want to speak to me?" she asked, as he took his place beside the grand piano, ready to turn over the leaves of her exercises.

"Yes; what are you playing?"

"I am practising, not playing anything of importance, anything consecutive, a reverie; but one must hack every day, without it all execution goes out of the fingers. It is a pity that hacking with the tongue so many hours a day does not conduce to brilliancy of conversation."

"I should like a few words with you," said the tutor, "if you can spare me the time. I wish to express my regret for having spoken last night. I ought not to have revealed the secret of my birth; but it was burning in my heart, and flamed out at my mouth."

Arminell continued playing and said nothing.

"We must let the matter drop," he said in a low tone. "I will not presume again, if you will endeavour to forget."

"How can I forget? As well dash vitriol in my eyes, and say don't allow them to smart."

He saw that there were tears on her face.

"I am sincerely sorry," he said, "I am heartily penitent. I see I have hurt you. My words were vitriol, and your eyes have overflowed."

"Doubly do you hurt me now—in noticing what should have been left unobserved. I am crying over my dead respect for my father. I loved him in my own queer and wayward fashion, though there was little we had in common. I believed him to be upright and good, and now my faith is gone to pieces."

"We must make allowances," said Jingles. "This happened long ago—I am twenty-one—and Lord Lamerton

was at the time young, under thirty. In token of his regret he has done much for me."

"I have been accustomed," said Arminell, "to look up to my father, and I have been full of a certain family pride—not pride in rank and wealth and all that sort of thing, but pride in the honour and integrity which I believed had been ours always; and now I find—" she sobbed; she could not finish her sentence.

"I am very sorry. I shall ever reproach myself," was the impotent remark of Jingles, but he did feel a sting of self-reproach. He had acted cruelly to kill a girl's trust in her father.

"It cannot be helped," she said, "it is done. Well, I know all, my eyes are opened, I accept you as my half-brother. When my father married again he sacrificed half his fatherhood in me, or so I felt it; and now of that half that remained something has been taken from me. Very little of my dear papa remains now—only a shadow."

"And I," said Jingles, "I am even in a worse plight than you, for I cannot love a father who has so wronged my mother." After a long pause, during which he held and fluttered a page of Arminell's music, he added, "What a forlorn condition mine is. I am here by sufferance who ought to be here by right. Every one dins in my ears the great kindness which I have had shown me by his lordship, and yet I know that I am not receiving more than a fraction of the portion that should be mine. Her ladyship patronises me, Giles regards me as a hired tutor, the servants are barely civil, the guests either ignore me or cast gibes, as—" he checked himself; he was again recurring to the half-shaved French poodle, when in at the door, or French window that led from the terrace, came Lord Lamerton, fresh and cheery.

"Saltren," he said, "you here! I am glad of that. The man I want; do me a favour, my good fellow, and be the

go-between 'twixt your father and me. Arminell, have you seen Giles this morning? He is better, dear rascal, and quite bright. What, doing drill on the keys? Saltren, I hope you will do your utmost endeavour with your father about his house. The company are in a quandary about it. We—I am a director, you know—we will give him a tip-top price, in fact, more than twice its value. The place is really not a pleasant one, and well deserves its chilly name. 'Pon my word, I believe it was the cold and damp situation that sowed in you the seeds of pulmonary disease. I sent Macduff down, but he could effect nothing. I believe, on my very soul, that there is no man on earth but yourself who can move your father. He is a stubborn man, eh, Saltren? I would go myself and see him about it, but Macduff tells me your father is ruffled about the manganese. It is the deuce of a pity, but I cannot help myself. I wish he could be persuaded to sell. Why, Saltren, between you, me, and the piano, I believe if I chose to dispute your father's right to Chillacot I could beat him. Macduff says that there has been some sort of acknowledgment made every year, there was no lease of any sort, and I am the lord of the manor—but I won't do that. I won't be harsh or seem so, not only because I have the utmost respect for the captain, such a good and thoroughly upright man, but above all, because he is your father, my boy. However, my dear Saltren, something must be done, we are in a fix. The company will be put to the greatest possible inconvenience and much expense that might be avoided, if it has to carry the line below. Your father—"

"Seven," muttered Jingles.

"I beg your pardon?" asked my lord, raising his eyebrows.

"Nothing, my lord," answered the young man. "I had no intention to interrupt. I was counting."

"Counting—oh, whilst my daughter played. She has

given over strumming, so give over counting, please. You will do what I ask, will you not?"

"I will see him, my lord, as it is your pleasure."

"Use all your powers of persuasion. Tell him that I want to cut a new road, to find employment for the men; and if the station be at Chillacot, the road must go there. If your father—"

"Eight," whispered Jingles as an aside, and looked at Arminell.

"If your father is reasonable, we will begin at once. You see how we are situated. I can understand his reluctance to quit a house where he was born, and for which he has done so much; but then, consider the price offered for it. This offer comes in most fitly now that the mine is abandoned. Your father—"

Again the tutor looked at Arminell.

"Your father must leave, as there is no work for him of the kind he is accustomed to, and a nice little capital would be very serviceable."

"I will go, my lord, at once," said Jingles.

"Thank you, Saltren, thank you. I have to be off to catch the 11.28 train."

He went out of the room through the window by which he had entered.

"Did you hear?" asked the tutor, partly in scorn, partly in pain. "Nine times at the least did he speak of the manganese captain as my father, although he knew perfectly all the while that I am not his son. Did you notice the pointed way in which he spoke? It was as though he suspected that I had got wind of the truth, and would emphatically let me understand that he would never, never acknowledge it, emphatically bid me consider the mining captain as my father. But"—his face darkened with anger—"I am by no means assured that we know the whole truth."

Arminell shuddered. Jingles looked intently at her, and saw that she divined his thoughts.

"No," said he calmly: "never fear that I will have the story published to the world. It would bring disgrace on too many persons. It would make my mother's position now as the wife of Captain Saltren an equivocal one. To disclose the truth, whatever complexion the truth might be found to wear when examined, would cause incalculable misery. What I shall do, whither I shall turn, I cannot yet tell."

Arminell also had noticed the manner in which Lord Lamerton had spoken of the captain to the tutor as his father, and she also, with her preconceptions, thought it was pointedly so done.

"No," said Jingles. "I shall have to leave this house, and I shall let his lordship know that I am not as blind as he would wish me to be. But what I shall do is as yet undetermined. I shall ask you to help me to come to a decision."

CHAPTER XX.

HE BECOMES SOMEBODY.

ARMINELL kept to herself that day. At lunch she had not much to say to her step-mother, and Lord Lamerton was out. Giles came down, and his mother talked to him and to the tutor, and seemed not to observe Arminell's silence.

The girl was unhappy. She had given way to a momentary weakness, or wave of regret at the thought of her father's unworthiness, but the feeling predominating in her mind was indignation that her mother should have been left unacquainted with the previous conduct of my lord. She repeated to herself, "Most certainly she never knew it, or she would never have married him, even if she knew that ceremony was worthless that had been performed over him and Marianne."

Arminell had idealised her mother. The girl had an affectionate heart, but she concentrated her affection on the memory of her mother. Ever since her father's re-marriage there had brooded over her a sense of wrong done to the memory of the mother. How could my lord, after having loved such a woman, take to himself his present wife?

Arminell was by no means easy in mind about Jingles' assurance that he would not speak. He had given the same assurance, as Mrs. Saltren had told her, to his mother, and had broken his promise. She resolved to exert her

powers of persuasion on him to deepen this determination to be silent.

It was unfortunate that Lord Lamerton had not been able to cultivate more freely his daughter's society, but a nobleman has ten thousand calls on his time; he is prevented from living that close life of familiar association with his children which is the privilege of those in an inferior station. He considered, and he was right in considering, that his country, his order, and his county had claims on him which must not be put aside. He was a poor orator indeed, and rarely spoke in the House, but he conscientiously voted with his party. In town he and Lady Lamerton saw a good deal of society, not because they cared particularly for it, but because they considered it a duty to entertain and keep up relations with friends and connexions. In the country Lord Lamerton, as Arminell contemptuously said, was kept on the gallop between school prize-givings, petty sessional meetings, quarter sessions, political and charitable institutions. He sat on boards, occupied chairs wherever there were boards and chairs placed for him. Moreover, at Orleigh, after the London season, the house was full of acquaintances, who came to shoot, hunt, drive, and be amused; and, with a house full of guests, Lord Lamerton had not opportunity for cultivating the society of his daughter. But he was a man full of kindness, and he made many attempts to gain her affection, and persuade her to be to him the close companion that a daughter often is to a father. These attempts had failed, chiefly because of the resentment she bore him for having married again. Had he remained a widower, and sought to associate her with him in his pursuits, it might have been otherwise; but, as he had looked elsewhere for a companion, she closed her heart in reserve against him.

Lord Lamerton was fond of hunting, and in this Arminell did not accord with him. Her Girton governess had

scoffed at those who had nothing better to do or think of than the pursuit, over hedge and gate, of a creature hardly bigger than a cat ; and the sneer had taken effect on the girl, and made her regard her father, because of his hunting, as somewhat grotesque and deficient in moral dignity. She could not accompany him when shooting, but she was out of sympathy with sport of this kind also. Her governess had spoken of those lords of creation who concentrated their vast intellects on the killing of a jacksnipe, and this remark stuck in her, as did the other about fox-hunting. She regarded sportsmen as fools, more or less. I once knew a man who had a mole with three white hairs growing out of it, on his nose ; and when I talked with him, one hemisphere of my brain was engaged in considering the mole, and asking how it came there—whether it had grown as he grew, or whether it had been of the same size when he was born, and whether his body had expanded and elongated about it ; why he did not disguise it with chalk or violet powder, or else darken the three white hairs with antimony ; whether he had consulted a surgeon concerning its removal, and, if so, why the surgeon had not removed it ? Was it the cork plugging an artery, so that the man would bleed to death were it to be cut away ? Why he, of all men, was afflicted with this mole—was it hereditary ? And if so, on which side did it come to him, on the paternal or maternal ? And if it were a hereditary mole, whether it would be possible, by judicious crossing, to reduce and finally extirpate it ? Then again, whether after long disappearance, in say three generations, the mole would declare itself in the fourth ? what the mole had to do with the doctrine of evolution ? whether the Anthropological Society had considered this mole ? and other questions. Afterwards I did not know whether this man had blonde hair or swarthy, eyes brown or blue, an intellectual forehead or one retreating, nose aquiline, *rétroussé*, or sausage. Neither could I

recall anything about his conversation—I could think of him only as the Man with the Mole, or, to be more exact, the Mole with the man.

Now, it sometimes happens that we see a blemish in a man's character, and that blemish entirely engrosses our attention, so that we cannot conceive of the man other than as the man with the blemish. He may have good, counterbalancing qualities, but of these we know nothing, we take no account, we see only the moral mole.

Moreover, this habit of seeing moles, and marking nothing but moles grows on us. I quite remember how that for a twelvemonth after I had talked with my gentleman with the mole, I examined the nose of every one I met, exploring it for moles, and expecting to find them hid under disguises, powdered or patched over ; or to discover traces of the amputation of moles, suspicious, tell-tale scars, or else tokens that latent moles were on the eve of eruption, moles that had been hidden deep in the system which were unsuspected by nearest and dearest, gradually, stealthily, inexorably working into publicity ; and I began to calculate how long it would be before the suspected mole came to light. And I became radically convinced that all men had moles in their constitution—that is, all men but myself—and that all men therefore were to be mistrusted, and held at arms' length, lest their moles should communicate themselves to us, after the manner of warts.

Arminell had not indeed reached this stage, but she was in that condition in which she saw the faults of her father and step-mother, and the faults only. Unable to forgive him his second marriage, she was predisposed to judge unfairly and harshly all he did, and all he left undone.

That one special reason for his re-marriage was his desire to provide her with a step-mother, one who could guide and advise her, and counteract some of the mischief done by injudicious governesses, never for a moment occurred to

her, and yet this had been the predominant motive in the mind of Lord Lamerton when he chose Lady Julia Chester-ton. She was a woman spoken of as clever and well-read, and kind-hearted. Clever, well-read, and kind-hearted, he had found her, and yet deficient in the very quality necessary for commanding Arminell's respect, and that was decision. Lady Julia, whatever Arminell might think, was an able woman, but her promiscuous reading had sapped the foundations of all independence of mind that she ever possessed, and had acted on her brain, as acids on osseous matter—reducing it to jelly. She was ever building with head, and hands, and heart, an indefatigable builder, but always on no foundations at all, because she argued that solid rock was nowhere discoverable, and sand was liable to shift, therefore she would erect her structures in the air, on nothing.

Lord Lamerton had been disappointed at the result, but had no idea as to the cause of failure. And now, upon a mind in antagonism, this disclosure made by Mrs. Saltren came, and brought Arminell's antagonism to a climax.

The tears which young Saltren had surprised were the sole tribute of her filial affection. When they were dried only hostility remained.

Some while ago, Messrs. Pears published an advertisement of their soap, on which were a green spot and another red, and the curious were invited to study one spot at a time, and then look at a blank wall. When this was done he who had contemplated the red spot, saw a green disc dance before his eyes; but if, on the other hand, he had looked long on the green spot, he saw before him only a red ball. It is so with a good many people; and it was so with Arminell. Whenever Lord or Lady Lamerton wished her to see this or that, to take such a view of some particular matter, she invariably saw the complementary colour, that is the reverse of what she was desired to see.

I, who write this, am ashamed to confess that I do the

same, and I am not sure that, occasionally, you, my dear reader, may also do the same—now and then, of course: only when the wind is easterly, and the liver is out of order, or the next morning after a ball. I know that when I have read the *Saturday Review*, I rise from the perusal believing in Mr. Gladstone, and ready to follow him to the bottom of the Red Sea, or wherever else he desires to lead us; and that when I have read the *Pall-Mall Gazette*, I am eager to drive my wife and daughters into the Primrose League. Also, I am quite sure that when some person has been warmly lauded in your hearing, dear reader, you take a low view of that individual, and when another has been much disparaged, you take up the cudgels to defend him, though he or she is an absolute stranger to you, and one of whom you have never heard before. I never recommend a watering-place to my friend, sure, if he goes there, he will call it a beastly hole, or dissuade him from buying a horse, by detailing its faults, so certain am I that my words will make him purchase the brute.

In the afternoon of the same day, as the sun was warm, and the air was soft, Saltren took little Giles upon the terrace; and Arminell, who saw them from her window, descended, and joined them there. She was uneasy and impatient to know what the tutor intended doing. Would he come to a full understanding with Lord Lamerton, and would my lord agree to provide for him, if he would depart and keep the secret of his birth undisclosed? Or would Jingles in London discover sufficient to make him suspect that his mother's marriage was valid, and be carried away by ambition to establish his legitimacy at all costs to others?

At the same moment that Arminell came out on the terrace, the rector's wife, Mrs. Cribbage, drove up in her wickerwork pony-carriage, and entered the house to pay a visit to Lady Lamerton.

Giles ran off to see his rabbits, and Jingles was left alone walking with Arminell.

"I suppose you are not burdening Giles with many lessons, now that he is convalescent?" said the girl.

"No, her ladyship does not wish him to be pressed. He is still heavy in his head with cold."

"Well," said Arminell, "I did not come here to talk about Giles, so we will dismiss him from our conversation. I have been considering this miserable matter, and I want to know what action you purpose taking on it."

"I also," said the tutor, "have been revolving the matter in my head, and I have resolved to leave Orleigh as soon as possible, and to ask my uncle, Mr. James Welsh, my mother's brother, to assist me to enter a literary career."

"Literary career! in what branch?"

"I intend to write for the press, I mean for the papers. Mr. Welsh lives by his profession, and I will do the same."

"That must be more interesting than teaching little boys Mensa—mensæ, Dominus—domini."

"The press is the sceptre that now rules the world, and I will wield it."

"Oh, how I envy you!" said Arminell. "You are about to do something, something worth the labour, something the thought of which kindles ambition. You will escape out of this wearisome round of hum-drum into the world of heroic action. Here is my lord spending his life in petty duties as he regards them; and has no result at the end to show; my lady thinking, planning, executing, and also with no result appearing; and I, wasting my time practising at the piano, running my voice over scales, doing a little sketching, reading odds and ends, picking flowers—and nothing can come of it all. We are made for more serious work."

"I believe," said Jingles, "that the writer of leaders exercises more power, because he appeals to a wider circle, than even the member of Parliament. One out of every

twenty who takes up a paper, reads the speeches, but every one reads the leading articles. I believe that we stand at the beginning of a great social revolution, not in England only, but throughout the civilized world, and I have long desired to take part in it, I mean in directing it. I do not hold the extreme opinions of some, but I have my opinions, no, that is not the word, convictions, bred in me by my perception of the inequalities, injustices, and unrealities of life as it is now organised."

"And you will work for your uncle?"

"I do not altogether hold with him," said Jingles. "He takes too commercial an aspect of the mission imposed on a man with his power and faculties reaching the ear of the people."

"Do you intend to live with him?"

"I cannot tell. I have decided on nothing as to the particulars. I have sketched out the broad features of my future career."

"And,"—Arminell's voice faltered—"my father?"

"I will write to him after I am in town, informing him that I know all, and that, therefore, it was not possible for me, with self-respect, to remain in his house."

Arminell looked down on the gravel.

"You will not go into this matter, not have my mother's name brought in question?"

"I will do nothing that can cause you a moment's pain," answered Jingles patronisingly.

"I shall be very solitary," she said. "More so than before. With you I can talk about matters of real interest, matters above the twaddle of common talk—Yes?"

This was addressed to the footman who appeared on the terrace and approached.

"What is it, Matthews?"

"My lady says, miss, that she will be glad if you could make it convenient to step into the parlour."

"There," said Arminell, when Matthews had withdrawn, "so she stands between me and the light at all times. I shall be back directly. She wants me about the choice of some new patterns for covering the sofas and chairs, I dare say. Here comes Giles from his rabbits."

Arminell walked slowly to the drawing-room, with a frown of vexation on her brow. She never responded with alacrity to her step-mother's calls.

Mrs. Cribbage, the rector's wife, saw at once that Arminell was in a bad humour, as she entered the room.

"I am sorry to interrupt you," she said. "It was my doing. Lady Lamerton and I were speaking about old Samuel Ceely, and I have just heard how you have interested yourself about him."

"I sent to ask you to come, dear," said Lady Lamerton in her sweet, gentle tones, "because Mrs. Cribbage has been telling me about the man. He is unobjectionable now, but he was a bit of a rake once."

"He was a gamekeeper to the late Lord Lamerton, and to the dowager," put in Mrs. Cribbage, "and was dismissed. I could find out all the particulars. I believe he sold the game, and besides, was esteemed not to have the best moral character. However, I know no particulars. I will now make a duty of enquiring, and finding them out. Of late years—except for snaring rabbits and laying night-lines—I believe he has been inoffensive."

"We are all miserable sinners," said Arminell, "we were told so on Sunday——"

"You were not at church on Sunday," interrupted Mrs. Cribbage.

"And," continued Arminell, "it is really satisfactory to know that poor Ceely is not an exception to that all-embracing rule, and that he has not the moral perfection which would make up for his physical short-comings."

Arminell could not endure the rector's wife, and took no

pains to disguise her feelings. Lady Lamerton likewise disliked her, but was too sweet and ladylike to show it.

Mrs. Cribbage was an indefatigable parish visitor. She worked the parish with the most conscientious ardour, considering a week lost unless she had visited every house in it and had dispensed a few pious scriptural remarks, and picked up a pinch of gossip in each. She knew everything about every one in the place, and retailed what she knew, especially if it were too unpleasant to retain. She did not give out much scandal in the cottages, but she pecked here and there after grains of information, and swallowed what she found. And the people, well aware of her liking, with that courtesy and readiness to oblige which characterises the English lower orders, brought out and strewed before her all the nasty, and ill-natured, and suspicious scraps of information they had hoarded in their houses. Mrs. Cribbage carried away whatever she learned, and communicated it to her acquaintances in a circle superior to that where she gathered it, to the Macduffs, to the wives of the neighbouring parsons, to the curate, with caution to Lady Lamerton. She acted as a turbine wheel that forces water up from a low level to houses on a height. She thus impelled a current of tittle-tattle from the deep places of society to those who lived above; but in this particular she differed from the turbine, that forces up clean water, whereas, what Mrs. Cribbage pumped up was usually the reverse.

Mrs. Cribbage was nettled by Arminell's uncourteous tone, and said: "What charming weather we have been having. I hope, Miss Inglett, that you enjoyed your Sunday morning walk?"

"It was as delightful as the weather," answered Arminell, well aware that there were claws in the velvet paw that stroked her. "Would you wish to know where I went?"

"O, my dear Miss Inglett! I know."

Then Mrs. Cribbage left, and when she was gone, Lady Lamerton said gently, "You were too curt with that woman, dear. You should never forget your manners, never be rude to a visitor in your own house."

"I am not an adept at concealment, as are others."

"The best screen against such a person is politeness."

"She is like a snail, with eyes that she stretches forth to all parts of the parish. I hate her."

"Arminell, your father has been putting prickly wire about on fences where cattle or pigs force their way. The beasts scratch themselves against the spikes, and after one or two experiences, learn to keep within bounds, and lose the desire to transgress. The Mrs. Cribbages—and there are yards of them—are the spiky wires of society, hedging us about, and keeping us in our proper places, odious in themselves, but useful, and a protection to us against ourselves."

"Barbed or unbarbed, I would break through them."

"No, my dear, you would only tear yourself to pieces on them, without hurting them; they are galvanised, plated, incapable of feeling, but they can inflict, and it is their mission to inflict an incredible amount of pain. You have already committed an indiscretion, and the crooked spike of the Cribbage tongue has caught you. Instead of going to church on Sunday morning, you walked in the road with Mr. Saltren. Of course, this was an act of mere thoughtlessness, but so is the first plunge of the calf against the prickly wire. Be more judicious, dear Armie, in the future. Where were you on Sunday afternoon?"

"Sitting with Giles and Mr. Saltren," said Arminell, furious with anger and resentment, "talking Sabbath talk. We discussed Noah's ark."

"And this morning he went into the music-room to you. Your father told me he found him there turning over the leaves of your music, and counting time for you; and

now Mrs. Cribbage arrives and sees you walking with him on the terrace. My dear Armie, Jingles is a nobody, and these nobodies are just those whom it is unsafe to trifle with. They so speedily lose their balance, and presume."

"Mr. Saltren is not such a nobody as you suppose," answered Arminell. "He is a man of ability and independence of thought, he is one who will before long prove himself to be a somebody, indeed."

"My dear, he is a somebody already who has established himself as a nuisance."

CHAPTER XXI.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

So, now, even this was denied Arminell, to talk with a rational man, the only rational man in the house, about the subjects that interested her. She must keep Mrs. Cribbage before her eyes, ever walk in daily fear of Mrs. Cribbage; consider, before she did anything she liked, what would Mrs. Cribbage's construction on it be. The opinion of Mrs. Cribbage was to be what she must strive to conciliate. All principle must be subordinated to the judgment of Mrs. Cribbage, all independence sacrificed to her.

It is one of those pleasant delusions under which we live in England, that we have only God and the Queen to look up to and obey. As a matter of fact Mrs. Cribbage is absolute in heaven and earth, and the Divine law has no force, unless subscribed by Mrs. Cribbage. We fear God, because Mrs. Cribbage is His vicegerent, and has the triple crown and power of the keys, and in addition bears the sword. Resistance is powerless before the all-reaching power of Mrs. Cribbage. The Holy Vehm was nothing in its might to the judgment of Mrs. Cribbage. Her ministers are everywhere executing her orders, and none of the condemned dare to remonstrate, or attempt escape. We may utter with impunity treasonable words against the Queen, and profess agnosticism towards God, but no one disputes

the existence of Mrs. Cribbage and would not lick the dust under her feet.

No one loves this autocrat, but there is not a Nihilist in her realm.

Lady Lamerton had likened her to American barbed wire, and those who have dealings with Mrs. Cribbage touch her as I have seen porters handle a roll of spiked wire deposited on the railway platform, with caution, and impatience to consign it to its proper destination. And yet, though every one dreads, and some positively loathe Mrs. Cribbage, yet all agree that it would not be possible to live without her. She keeps society together as a paper-weight compacts all kinds of scraps of correspondence, and bills and notices.

As long as young girls are in the nursery, and subject to governesses, they look forward to their coming out as to a time of emancipation. They have not reckoned on Mrs. Cribbage, who, as with a whoop they burst out of the school-room, confronts them and blocks their road.

Arminell had done with her schooling, and properly ought to have come out that year, but the event had been postponed, as Lord Lamerton did not wish to go to town that year. She was free from governesses, and by no means inclined to lay her neck under the wheels of Mrs. Cribbage's car. When my lord and my lady had gone to town during the season, Arminell and Giles had not attended them. Giles was better in health in the country, with his pony, and his cricket, that is, with the tutor bowling to him, and the coachman's son acting as long-stop; accordingly, he was left at Orleigh to his great delight, and Arminell was left as well, with the governess, to continue her lessons, till she put off governesses and other childish things. Arminell had not therefore been brought much in contact with the world, and did not know the force of public opinion, she no more considered it than she con-

sidered the pressure of the atmosphere. According to our best authorities, we are subjected to the weight of fifteen pounds to each square-inch of surface, and a man of ordinary size sustains a pressure on him of some thirty-thousand pounds of air. I am a man of ordinary size, but I no more knew that I laboured under the burden of thirty-thousand pounds than I did that I was subjected to the pressure of about the same burden of Mrs. Cribbage who sits on my shoulders all day and squats on my chest all night, till I turned up the matter in an encyclopædia. We no more think about the pressure of public opinion, I say, than we do about the pressure of the atmosphere. We make allowance for it, in all we undertake.

If we ascend great heights we suffer because we are no longer subjected to the pressure; our noses bleed, our breath comes short; and if, by any chance, we get out of the region where public opinion weighs, we become alarmed, uneasy, gasp, and cry out to be brought back under its incubus once more.

When Arminell had left the room, and closed the door behind her, she stood for a minute, resting the fingers of her left hand on the lock.

Should she obey her step-mother or defy her? She had promised young Saltren to return to the terrace. She wanted to have further talk with him. Why should she submit to the dictation of Lady Lamerton who was influenced by the hints of that detestable Mrs. Cribbage? If Lady Lamerton were allowed her own way in small matters, she would presume to dictate in those which were large, and Arminell would be allowed no will of her own. In her heart, the girl admitted that her step-mother had reason to reproach her. If Jingles were only the tutor, and the son of the mining captain, he was, as my lady said, a nobody, and it was unbecoming for her to frequent his society. Indeed, it was hardly decorous for her to be so much with

him, were he any thing else but what she knew him to be, her brother. The possession of the knowledge of their relationship altered the aspect of her conduct radically, and justified it. Lady Lamerton, in her ignorance, interfered, and might be excused interfering, but she, Arminell, being better informed, was at liberty to act differently from what my lady advised. The young man was her brother, and what more delightful intercourse than that which subsists between brother and sister, when like-minded? There had taken place no open rupture between her ladyship and Arminell as yet; but it was inevitable that one would come, and that shortly: perhaps, the girl argued, the sooner the better, that her step-mother might be made clearly to understand that she—Arminell—stood on her independence.

The girl let go the handle of the drawing-room door, and with beating heart and heaving bosom, went deliberately out on the terrace and resumed her place at the side of Jingles.

"I have come," she said, "as I undertook. My lady has read me a lecture."

"About what?"

"About barbed wire, about Mrs. Cribbage. That creature saw me walking with you, and remonstrated with mamma, I mean my step-mother, and my lady retailed the remonstrance, as in duty bound; I am forsooth to be placed under Mrs. Cribbage, to have my feet strapped, compressed and distorted, like those of a Chinese lady, till I am unable to walk alone, and must lean on the shoulders of the Cribbage and my lady. This sort of thing is intolerable to me. Oh, that I were a man, that I might run away, as you are going to do, and stamp, and stride, and dance, and use every muscle in my feet freely. I detest this strapping and pinching and crippling."

"I have felt the same," said the young man. "And it has become unendurable to me. One must either submit

or break away. The process must end in irremediable distortion, and fatal deprivation of the power of walking independently. Your whole future, your character for good or evil, depends on your conduct now. If you fall back in your chair unable to resist—”

“No, I will kick and kick, I will not be disabled from walking.”

“If you make a brief attempt to resist, and do not maintain a stubborn and determined resistance, you will be cramped and crippled for life. As you put it, the whole social system of the upper classes is Chinese bandaging of the feet; not only so, but it is Indian flattening of the skull. I have felt, and so have you, that in this house our heads are strapped between boards to give them the requisite shape, and our brains to be not allowed to exceed the requisite measure.”

“What can I do? I have no one but yourself to advise me.”

“It will be impossible for you to escape the influences brought to bear on you, if you remain here; the Cribbages, great and small, will lie in wait till you are napping and then fall on you and bind you, and apply the laces to your feet, and the boards to your head.”

“But, whither could I go?” Arminell asked. She thought for a moment, and then said, “If I went to my Aunt Hermione, it would be going from beneath the shower under the shoot. There never was a more formal, society-laced creature in the whole world than my aunt, Lady Hermione Flathead. Everything in her house, her talk, her manners, her mind, her piety, everything about her is conventional.”

Lady Lamerton approached, with little spots of colour in her cheeks, holding a parasol.

“My dear Arminell,” she said, “how can you be so inconsiderate as to come out without a sunshade?”

"You see," said Arminell, turning contemptuously away and addressing the tutor; "everything is to order. I may not even take two steps without a parasol, in fine weather; and in bad, without an umbrella. The hand must never be free."

"I think, Mr. Saltren," said Lady Lamerton, "that it would be well if Giles went indoors, and, now that he is better, learn a little Latin."

"As your ladyship desires it, certainly," answered the tutor.

"I am so glad, my dear," said Lady Lamerton, "that you have waited for me on the terrace. I am sorry to have detained you one minute, but I was looking out the address of those Straceys. I will take your arm and we will look at the pansies."

"Step-mothers, the Germans call them," said Arminell. "I do not admire pansies."

"We call them pansies, from *pensée*, dear, which means thought, kind thought, and fore-thought, which possibly, though not always acknowledged, is to be found in step-mothers."

Arminell tossed her head.

"The homely name for these same flowers," continued Lady Lamerton, "is hearts-ease, and I'm sure it is a misnomer, if hearts-ease be the equivalent for step-mother, especially when she has to do with a wayward step-daughter."

"I think that step-mothers would find most hearts-ease, if they would turn their activity away from their step-daughters, and leave them alone."

"My conscience will not suffer me to do this," answered Lady Lamerton without losing her temper. "You may not acknowledge my authority, and you may hold cheap my intellectual powers and acquirements, but, after all, Armie, I *am* in authority, and I do not think I am quite a fool. I can, and I must, warn you against dashing yourself against

the barbed wire. My dear, if we would listen to others, we would save ourselves many a tear and bitter experience. I love you too well, and your dear father too well, to leave you uncautioned when I see you doing what is foolish and dangerous."

"But do you not know that experience is the one thing that must be bought, and cannot be accepted as a gift?"

"I beg your pardon. Our whole system of social culture is built upon experience accepted and not bought. It is not the Catholics alone who hold by tradition, we all do it, or are barbarians. Progress without it is impracticable. We start from the accumulated experience of the past, handed on to us by the traditions of our fathers. If everyone began by rejecting the acquisitions of the past, advance would be limited to the term of man's natural life, for everyone would begin from the beginning; whereas, each generation now starts where the last generation left off. It is like the hill of Hissarlik where there are cities superposed the one on the other, and each is an advance culturally and artistically on that below—above the Greek Ilium, below the Homeric Troy, under that the primeval hovel of the flint-chipper."

"Each on the ruins of the other."

"Each using up the material of the other, following the acquisitions of the earlier builders and pushing further on to structural perfection."

"That may be true of material process," said Arminell, "but, morally, it is not true. Besides, our forefathers made blunders. I have been speaking with Mr. Saltren about the Flatheads and the Chinese who compress the heads and double up the feet of children. But our ancestors were nearly as stupid. Look at the monument of the first Lord Lamerton in the church. See the swaddled babies represented on it, cross-gartered like Malvolio. Now we give freedom to our babies, let them stretch, and scramble, and sprawl. But you old ladies still treat us young girls as your

great-grandmothers treated their babies. You swaddle us, and keep us swaddled all our life long. No wonder we resent it. The babies got emancipated, and so will we. I have heard both papa and you say that when you were children you were not allowed to draw nearer the fire than the margin of the rug. Was there sense in that? Was the fire lighted to radiate its heat over an area circumscribed by the mat, and that the little prim mortals with blue noses and frosty fingers must shiver beyond the range of its warmth? We do not see it. We will step across the rug, and if we are cold, step inside the fender."

"And set fire to your skirts?"

"We will go for warmth where it is to be found, and not keep aloof from it because of the vain traditions of the elders."

Lady Lamerton sighed.

"Well, dear," she said, "we will not argue the matter. To shift the subject, I hardly think it was showing much good feeling in you to come straight out here after I had expressed my wish that you would not. It was not what I may term—pretty."

"I had promised Mr. Saltren to return to him and resume the thread of our interrupted conversation. Why did you send for me about old Ceely's past history, as if I cared a straw for that?"

"I sent for you, Armie, because you were walking with the tutor, and Mrs. Cribbage had observed it. She told me, also, that you had been seen with him when you ought to have been at church."

"Well?"

"It was injudicious. She also said that you had been observed walking in the avenue last night with a gentleman; but I was able to assure her that the gentleman was your father."

"This espionage is insufferable," interrupted Arminell.

"I allow it is unpleasant, but we must be careful to give no occasion for ill-natured remark."

"I can not. I will not be swaddled and have my feet crippled, and my head compressed, and then like a Chinese lady ask to be helped about by you and Mrs. Cribbage."

"Better that than by any one you may pick up."

"I do not ask to be helped about by any one I may pick up. Besides, Mr. Saltren was not picked up by me, but by my father. He introduced him to the house, gave him to be the guide and companion of Giles, and therefore I cannot see why I may not cultivate his acquaintance, and, if I see fit, lean on him. I will not be swaddled, and passed about from arm to arm—baby eternal!"

CHAPTER XXII.

TOO LATE.

LADY LAMERTON said no more to Arminell, but waited till the return of his lordship, before dinner, and spoke to him on the matter.

She was aware that any further exertion of authority would lead to no good. She was a kind woman who laboured to be on excellent terms with everybody, and who had disciplined herself to the perpetual bearing of olive branches. She had done her utmost to gain Arminell's goodwill, but had gone the wrong way to work. She had made concession after concession, and this made her step-daughter regard her as wanting in spirit, and the grey foliage of Lady Lamerton's olive boughs had become weariful in the eyes of the girl.

If my lady had taken a firm course from the first, and had held consistently to it, Arminell might have disliked her, but would not have despised her. It does not succeed to buy off barbarians. Moreover, Arminell misconstrued her step-mother's motives. She thought that my lady's peace pledges were sham, that she endeavoured to beguile her into confidence, in order that she might establish a despotic authority over her.

"I do not know what to do with Armie!" sighed Lady Lamerton. "We have had a passage of arms to-day, and

she has shaken her glove in my face. Another word from me, and she would have thrown it at my feet."

She said no more, as she was afraid of saying too much, and she waited for her husband to speak. But, as he offered no remark, but looked annoyed, she continued, "I am sorry to speak to you. I know that I am in fault. I ought to have won her heart, and with it her cheerful respect, but I have not. It is now too late for me to alter my conduct. Arminell was a girl of sense when I came here, and it really seems disgraceful that at my age I should have been unable to win the child, or master her. But I have failed, and I acknowledge the failure frankly, without knowing what to suggest as a remedy to the mischief done. I accept all the blame you may be inclined to lay on me—"

Lord Lamerton went up to his wife, took her face between his hands, and kissed her.

"Little woman, I lay no blame on you."

"Well, dear, then I do on myself. I told you last night how I accounted for it. One can look back and see one's faults, but looking forward one is still in ignorance what road to pursue. It really seems to me, Lamerton, that on life's way all the direction posts are painted so as to show us where we have diverged from the right way and not whither we are to go."

"Julia, I exercise as little control over Armie as yourself. It is a painful confession for a father to make, that he has not won the respect of his child—of his daughter, I mean: as for Giles—dear monkey—" his voice softened and had a slight shake in it.

"And I am sure," said Lady Lamerton, putting her arms round his neck, and drawing his fresh red cheek to her lips, "that there is nothing, nothing whatever in you to make her lack the proper regard."

"I will tell you what it is," said Lord Lamerton, "Armie is young, and believes in heroes. We are both of us too ordi-

nary in our ways, in our ideas, in our submission to the social laws, in our arm-in-arm plod along the road of duty, to satisfy her. She wants some one with great ideas to guide her ; with high-flown sentiment ; to such an one alone will she look up. She is young, this will wear off, and she will sober down, and come to regard hum-drum life with respect."

"In the meantime much folly may be perpetrated," said Lady Lamerton sadly. "Do look how much has been spent in the restoration of Orleigh. You have undone all that your grandfather had done. He overlaid the stone with stucco, and knocked out the mullions of the windows for the insertion of sashes, and painted over drab all the oak that was not cut away. So are we in later years restoring the mistakes made in ourselves, perhaps by our parents in our bringing up, but certainly, also, by our own folly and bad taste in youth. And well for us if there is still solid stone to be cleared of plaster, and rich old oak to be cleared of the paint that obscures it. What I dread is lest the iconoclastic spirit should be so strong in the girl that she may hack and tear down in her violent passion for change what can never be recovered and re-erected."

"She is not without principle."

"She mistakes her caprices for principles. Her own will is the ruling motive of all her actions, she has no external canon to which she regulates her actions and submits her will."

"What caprice has she got now ?"

"She has taken a violent fancy to the society of young Saltren."

"Oh ! he is harmless."

"I am not so certain of that. He is morbid and discontented."

"Discontented ! About what ? Faith—he must be hard to please then. Everything has been done for him that could be done."

"Possibly for that reason he is discontented. Some men like to make their own fortunes, not to have them made for them. You have, in my opinion, done too much for the young fellow."

"He was consumptive and would certainly have died, had I not sent him abroad."

"Yes—but after that?"

"Then he was unfit for manual labour, and he was an intelligent lad, refined, and delicate still. So I had him educated."

"Are you sure he is grateful for what you have done for him?"

Lord Lamerton shrugged his shoulders. "I never gave a thought to that. I suppose so."

"I am not sure that he is. Look at children, they accept as their due everything given them, all care shown them, and pay no regard to the sacrifices made for them. There is no conscious gratitude in children. I should not be surprised if it were the same with young Saltren. I do not altogether trust him. There is a something in him I do not like. He does his duty by Giles. He is respectful to you and me—and yet—I have no confidence in him."

"Julia," said Lord Lamerton with a laugh, "I know what it is, you mistrust him because he is not a gentleman by birth."

"Not at all," answered his wife, warmly. "Though I grant that there is a better guarantee for a man of birth conducting himself properly in a place of trust, because he has deposited such stakes. Even if he have not principle in himself, he will not act as if he had none, for fear of losing caste. Whereas one with no connections about him to hold him in check will only act aright if he have principle. But we have gone from our topic, which was, not Jingles, but Arminell. I want to speak about her, and about him only so far as he influences her for good or bad. I will tell you my cause of uneasiness."

Then she related to her husband what she knew about the Sunday walk in the morning, and the Sunday talk in the afternoon, and the music-room meeting on the following morning.

"Oh!" said his lordship, "he only went there to turn over the pages of her music."

"You see nothing in that?"

"'Pon my soul, no."

"Then I must tell you about her conduct this afternoon, when she disobeyed me in a marked, and—I am sorry to use the expression—offensive manner."

"That I will not tolerate. I can not suffer her to be insolent to you."

"For pity's sake do not interfere. You will make matters worse. She will hate me for having informed you of what occurred. No—take some other course."

"What course?"

"Will it not be well to get rid of Saltren? And till he has departed, let Arminell go to Lady Hermione Woodhead."

Within parenthesis be it said that Woodhead was Aunt Hermione's real name, only in scorn, and to signify her contraction of mind had Arminell called her Flathead, after the tribe of Indians which affects the compression of infants' skulls.

"I cannot dismiss him at a moment's notice, like a servant who has misconducted himself. I'll be bound it is not his fault—it is Armie's."

"Let Arminell go to her aunt's at once."

"By all means. I'll have a talk with Saltren."

"Not a word about Arminell to him."

"Of course not, Julia. Now, my dear, it is time for me to dress for dinner."

Dinner passed with restraint on all sides. Lord Lamer-ton was uncomfortable because he felt he must speak to

Arminell, and must give his *cong  * to the tutor. Arminell was in an irritable frame of mind, suspecting that something was brewing, and Lady Lamerton was uneasy because she saw that her husband was disturbed in his usually placid manner.

After dinner, Lord Lamerton said to his daughter as she was leaving the room, "Armie, dear, are you going into the avenue? If so, I shall be glad of your company, as I intend to go there with a cigar presently."

"If you wish it, papa; but—Mrs. Cribbage heard that you and I had been walking there last night, and it meets with her disapproval. May James first run to the rectory with our compliments and ask Mrs. Cribbage's kind permission?"

She looked, as she spoke, at her step-mother, and there was defiance in her eye.

"Nonsense, dear," said her father. "I shall be out there in ten minutes. Will you have a whitewash, Saltren, and then I will leave for my cigar? You are not much of a wine-drinker, I am glad, however, you are not a teetotaller like your father."

Again a reference to the captain. Jingles looked towards the door, and caught Arminell's eye as she went through. She also had heard the reference, and understood it, as did the tutor. Certainly his lordship was very determined to have the past buried, and to refuse all paternity in the young fellow.

"Very well," said the girl to herself, "I will let my father understand that I know more than he supposes. He has no right to shelve his responsibilities. If a man has done wrong, let him be manful, and bear the consequences. I would do so. I would be ashamed not to do so."

She set her teeth, and her step was firm. She threw a light shawl over her head and shoulders and went into the avenue, where she paced with a rebellious, beating heart a few minutes alone, till her father joined her.

"I know, papa, what you want ; or rather what you have been driven to. My lady has been peaching of me, and has constituted you her executioner."

"Arminell, I dislike this tone. You forget that courtesy which is due to a father."

"Exacted of a father," corrected the girl.

"And due to him as a father," said Lord Lamerton gravely. His cigar was out. He struck a fusee and lighted it again. His hand was not steady ; Arminell looked in his face, illumined by the fusee, and her heart relented. That was a good, kind face, a guileless face, very honest, and she could see by the flare of the match that it was troubled. But her perverse mood gained the upper hand again in a moment. She possessed the feminine instinct in dealing with men, when threatened, to attack, not wait to be attacked.

"I do not think it fair, papa, that my lady should hide herself behind you, and thrust you forward, as besiegers attack a fortress, from behind a screen."

"You are utterly mistaken, Arminell, if you imagine that your mother—your step-mother—has intentions of attacking you. Her heart overflows with kindness towards you, the warmest kindness."

"Papa, when Vesuvius is in eruption, the villagers in proximity pray to heaven to divert into the sea, anywhere but towards them, the warm gush of incandescent lava."

"Arminell," said her father, "you pain me inexpressibly. I suppose that it is inevitable that a daughter by a first wife should not agree thoroughly with her father's second choice ; but, 'pon my soul, I can see no occasion for you to take up arms against your step-mother ; she has been too forbearing with you. She is the kindest, most considerate and conscientious of women."

"You may spare me the enumeration of her good qualities, papa : I am sure she is a paragon in your eyes,

and I would not disturb the happy conviction. I suppose marriage is much like the transfusion of blood practised by the *rénaissance* physicians. An injection of rabbit's blood into the arm of a turbulent man made him sensible to fear, and one of lion's blood into the arteries of a coward infused heroism into his soul. When there was an interchange of blood between two individuals they came to think alike, feel alike, and act alike; it is a happy condition. But as there has been no infusion of my lady's blood into me—I think and feel and act quite differently from her."

"We will leave her out of the question," said Lord Lamerton, dropping his daughter's arm which at first he had taken affectionately. "Confound it, my cigar is out again, the tobacco must be bad. I will not trouble to relight it."

"By all means let us leave my lady out of the question," said Arminell. "I suppose I am not to be court-martialed for having discussed Noah's Ark on Sunday with the tutor. I assure you we did not question the universality of the Flood, we talked only of the packing of the animals in the Ark."

"Was there any necessity for Mr. Saltren to come to you in the music-room?"

"No necessity whatever. He came for the pleasure of talking to me, not even to turn over my music leaves."

"You must not forget, my dear, who he is."

"I do not, I assure you, papa, it is precisely *that* which makes me take such an interest in him."

"Well, my dear, I am glad of that; but you must not allow him to forget what is due to you. It will not do for you to encourage him. He is only a mining captain's son."

"Papa," said Arminell, slowly and emphatically, "I know very well whose son he is."

"Of course you do; all I say is, do not forget it. He is a nice fellow, has plenty of brains, and knows his place."

"Yes, papa," said Arminell, "he knows his place, and he

knows how equivocal that place is. He is regarded as one thing, and he *is* another."

"I daresay I made a mistake in bringing him here so near to his father."

"So very near to his father, and yet so separated from him."

"I suppose so," said Lord Lamerton, "education does separate."

"It separates so widely that those who are divided by it hardly regard each other as belonging to the same human family."

"I daresay it is so ; the miners cannot judge me fairly about the manganese, because we stand on different educational levels."

"It is not only those beneath the line who misjudge those above ; it is sometimes the superiors who misunderstand those below."

"Very possibly ; but, my dear, that lower class, with limited culture and narrow views, is nowadays the dominating class. It is, in fact, the privileged class, it pays no taxes, and yet elects our rulers ; our class is politically swamped, we exist upon sufferance. Formerly the castle dominated the cottage, but now the cottages command the castle. We, the educated and wealthy, are maintained as parochial cows, to furnish the parishioners with milk, and when we run dry are cut up to be eaten, and our bones treated with sulphuric acid and given to the earth to dress it for mangel-wurzel."

Arminell was vexed at the crafty way in which, according to her view, her father shifted ground, when she approached too nearly the delicate secret. She wondered whether she had spoken plainly enough to let him understand how much she knew. It was not her desire to come to plain words, she would spare him that humiliation. It would be quite enough, it would answer her purpose fully to let him under-

stand that she knew the real facts as to the relationship in which she stood to the tutor.

"Papa," said Arminell, "Giles Inglett Saltren strikes me as standing towards us much in the same relation as do those apocryphal books the names of which my lady was teaching the children on Sunday. He is not canonical, of questionable origin, and to be passed over."

"I do not understand you, Armie."

"I am sorry, papa, that I do not see my way to express my meaning unenigmatically."

"Armie, I have been talking to mamma about your paying a visit to Aunt Hermione. You really ought to see the Academy this year, and, as mamma and I do not intend to go to town, it will be an opportunity for you."

"Aunt Hermione!"—Arminell stood still. "I don't want to go to her. Why should I go? I do not like her, and she detests me."

"My dear, I wish it."

"What? That I should see the Academy? I can take a day ticket, run up, race through Burlington House, and come home the same evening."

"No, my dear, I wish you to stay a couple of months at least, with Hermione."

"I see—you want to put me off, out of the way of the tutor, so as to have no more talk, no more confidences with him. That is my lady's scheme. It is too late, papa, do you understand me? It is too late."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say. This is locking the door after the horse is stolen. Send me away! It will not alter matters one scrap. As I said before, the precaution have come too late."

CHAPTER XXIII.

“FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.”

SUDDENLY, in the midst of his breakfast, Lord Lamerton uttered an exclamation and turned purple, and thrust his chair from the table.

Lady Lamerton sprang from her seat. Arminell was alarmed. She had not seen her father in this condition before ; was he threatened with apoplexy ?

“Look at it ! God bless my soul !” gasped his lordship. “What confounded scoundrel has written it ? Look at it, Julia, it is monstrous.”

He thrust a newspaper from him.

“It is in this damned Radical daily. Look at it, Julia ! Where is Macduff ! I want Macduff. I’ll send for my solicitor. Confound their impudence, and the lies—the lies !” Lord Lamerton gasped for breath, then he went on again, “From our Own Correspondent—who is he ? If I knew I would have him dragged through the horsepond ; the grooms and keepers would do it—delighted to do it—if I stood consequences. Here am I held up as a monster of injustice, to the scorn, the abhorrence of all right-minded men, because I have capriciously closed the manganese mine. There is a harrowing picture drawn of a hundred householders thrown out of work—and thrown out of work, it is suggested, because at the last election they voted Liberal ; I am depopulating Auburn—I am in a degree

breaking up families. Not a word about the mine threatening my foundations—not a hint that I have lost a thousand pounds a year by it these five years. I am driving the trade out of the country ; and, as if that were not enough, here is a sketch of the sort of house in which I pig my tenants—Patience Kite's tumble-down hovel at the old lime-quarry ! As if I were responsible for that, when she has it on lives, and we want to turn her out and repair it, and she won't go. When we have condemned the house, and gone as far as the law will allow us ! Where is Macduff ? I must see Macduff about this ; and then"—his lordship nearly strangled, his throat swelled and he was obliged to loose his cravat—"and then there is a picture drawn in the liveliest colours of Saltren's house—I beg your pardon, Saltren, this must cause you as much annoyance as it does myself—of Chillacot, in beautiful order, as it is ; Captain Saltren does right by whatever he has the care of—of Chillacot as an instance of a free holding, of a holding not under one of those leviathans, the great landlords of England. Look at this, then look at that—look at Patience Kite's ruin and Captain Saltren's villa ; there you have in a nutshell the difference between free land and land in bonds, under one of the ogres, the earth-eaters. God bless my soul, it is monstrous ; and it will all be believed, and I shall walk about pointed at as a tyrant, an enemy of the people, a disgrace to my country and my class. I don't care whether she kicks and curses, I will take the law into my hands and at once have Mrs. Kite turned out, and her cottage pulled down or put in order. I suppose I dare not pull it down, or the papers will be down on me again. I will not have a cottage on my land described as this has been, and the blame laid on me ; the woman shall give up her lease. How came the fellow to see the cottage ? He describes it accurately ; it is true that the door has tumbled in ; it is true that the

chimney threatens to fall ; it is true that the staircase is all to pieces, but this is no fault of mine. He has talked to Mrs. Kite, but I am sure she never used the words he has put into her mouth. Where is Macduff? I wish, my dear Saltren, you would find him and send him to me. By-the-way, have you spoken to your father about—what was it? Oh, yes, the sale of his house. Fortunate it is that a railway company, and not I, want Chillacot, or I should be represented as the rich man demanding the ewe lamb, as coveting Naboth's vineyard, by this prophet of the press. Who the deuce is he? He must have been here and must know something of the place ; there is just so much of truth mixed up with the misrepresentations as to make the case look an honest one. I want Macduff. Have you seen your father about that matter of Chillacot, Saltren?"

"My lord," said Jingles, "I am sorry I have not seen him yet. In fact, to tell the truth, I—I yesterday forgot the commission."

"Oh!" said Lord Lamerton, now hot and irritable, "oh don't trouble yourself any more about it. I'll send Matthews after Macduff. I'll go down to Chillacot myself. Confound this correspondent. His impudence is amazing."

Lord Lamerton took most matters easily. The enigmatical words of his daughter, the preceding evening, in the avenue, had not made much impression on him. They were, he said, part of her rodomontade. But he repeated them to his wife, and to her they had a graver significance than he attributed to them. This article in the paper, however, agitated him deeply, and he was very angry, more angry than any one had seen him for several years ; and the last explosion was caused by the poisoning of some of his fox-hounds.

"Matthews, send James down after Mr. Macduff at once."

"Yes, my lord."

"And, Saltren, a word with you in the smoking-room if you can spare me the time."

"I am at your service, my lord."

Lord Lamerton had been so excited by the article he had read that he was in a humour to find fault ; and, as Viola says,

"Like the haggard cheek at every feather
That comes before his eye."

Such moods did not last long ; he was the slowest of men to be roused, and when angry, the most placable ; but an injustice angered him, and he had been unjustly treated in the article in that morning's paper.

There must be deep in our souls, some original sense of justice, for there is nothing so maddens a man and sweeps him in angry fever beyond the control of reason, as a sense of injustice done, not only to himself, but to another. It is the violation of this ineradicable sense of justice which provokes to the commission of the grossest injustice, for it blinds the eyes to all extenuations and qualifying circumstances. It is an expansive and explosive gas that lies latent in every breast—in the most pure and crystalline, an infinite blessing to the world, but often infinitely mischievous. It is the moral dynamite in our composition.

There is a hot well in Iceland called Strokr which bubbles and steams far below the surface, the most innocuous, apparently, of hot springs, and one that is even beneficial. But if a clod of turf be thrown down the gullet, Strokr holds his breath for a moment and is then resolved into a raging geyser, a volcano of scalding steam and water. I once let a flannel-shirt down by a fishing-line, thinking to wash it in the cauldron of Strokr, and Strokr resented the insult, and blew my shirt to threads, so that I never recovered of it—no, not a button. It is so with men, they are all Strokr, with a fund of warmth in their hearts,

and they grumble and fume, but, for all that, exhale much heat, and nourish flowers about them and pasture for sheep and asses, but some slight wad of turf, or a dirty flannel-shirt—some trifling wrong done their sense of justice,—and they become raging geysers.

Lord Lamerton was not so completely transformed as that, because culture imposes control on a man, but he was bubbling and squirting. He was not angry with the tutor, personally, because he did not think that the young man was blameworthy. What indiscretion had been committed, had been committed by Arminell. With her he was angry, because her tone towards him and her behaviour to her step-mother were defiant. "Saltren," said he, when he reached the smoking-room and was alone with Jingles, "do you think your uncle could have written that abominable article? I did not mention my suspicion in the breakfast-room, so as not to give you pain, or trouble the ladies, but, 'pon my soul, I do not see who else could have done it. I heard he had been down here on Sunday, and I hoped he had talked the matter of the line and Chillacot over with your father, and had given him sensible advice. Yet I can hardly think he would do such an ungracious, under the circumstances, such an immoral thing as write this, not merely with *suppressio veri*, which is in itself *suggestio falsi*, but with the lies broadly and frankly put. Upon my word—I know Welsh is a Radical—I do not see who else could have done it."

"I am afraid he has, though I cannot say. I did not see him, my lord," said the tutor.

"I am sorry, really it is too bad, after all that has been done—no, I will say nothing about that. Confound it all, it is too bad. And what can I do? If I write a correction, will it be inserted? If inserted, will it not serve for a leader in which all I have admitted is exaggerated and distorted, and I am made to be doubly in the wrong? And now, I

suppose it is high time for Giles to go to school. I don't want you to suppose that this idea of mine has risen in any way from this damned article, or has anything whatever to do with it, because it has not. I do not for one instant attribute to you any part in it. I know that it shocks you as it shocks me; that you see how wrong it is, as I do. But, nevertheless, Giles must go to school; his mother and I have talked it over, and between you and me, I don't want the boy—dear monkey that he is—to be over-coddled at home. His mother is very fond of him, and gets alarmed if the least thing is the matter with him, and fidgets and frets, and, in a word, the boy may get spoiled by his mother. A lad must learn to hold his own among others, to measure himself beside others, and, above all, to give way where it is courteous, as well as right to give way. A boy must learn that others have to be considered as well as himself, and there is no place like school for teaching a fellow that. So Giles must go to school. Poor little creature, I wonder how he will like it? Cry at first, and then make up his mind to bear it. I do trust if he have his bad dreams the other chaps won't bolster and lick him for squalling out at night and rousing them. Poor monkey! I hope they will make allowance for him. He is not very strong. Giles must go to school, and not be coddled here. His mother is absurdly fond of the little fellow. I don't want to hurry you—Saltren, and you can always rely on me as ready to do my best for you, but I think you ought to look about you, at your leisure, you know, but still look about you. And, damn that article, don't you have anything to do with Welsh, he will lead you, heaven alone knows whither."

"My lord," said Saltren, "you forestall me. I myself was about to ask leave to depart. I have not the natural qualifications for a tutor; I lack, perhaps, the necessary patience. I intend to embrace the literary profession. Indeed, I may almost say that I have secured a situation

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which will make me independent. Secured is, possibly, too decided a word—I have applied for one.”

“I am glad to hear it, I am very glad. My lady said she thought you had a fancy for something else. But—don’t have anything to do with Welsh. He will carry you along the wrong course, along one where I could do nothing for you, and, I will always help you when I can.”

“My lord, whenever you can, with convenience, spare me—”

“Spare you ! Oh don’t let us stand in your way. You have almost got a berth to get into ?”

“I have applied for a place which I may almost say I can calculate on having. My only difficulty has been, that I did not know when I should be at liberty. If your lordship would kindly allow me to leave immediately——”

“My dear fellow, suit your own convenience. We can manage with Giles. The rector will give him an hour or two of Latin and Greek, till the term begins, when he can go to school. I don’t know that I won’t let the monkey run wild till the time comes for the tasks to begin.”

“Then, my lord, it is understood that I may go immediately ?”

“Certainly.”

Though Lord Lamerton gave his consent, he was a little surprised at the readiness of the tutor to leave Orleigh, and to throw up his situation before he had really secured another. There was something ungracious in his conduct after all the kindnesses he had received which jarred on his lordship’s feelings. He had a real liking for the young man, and he was desirous that he should do well for himself. He was unable to resist the temptation to say--“You seem in a vast hurry to leave us, Saltren.”

“I have reasons, my lord. Something has occurred which makes it imperative on me to leave this house immediately.”

"Do you refer to this article by our own correspondent?"

"Not at all, my lord. It has no connection with that. Something, a distressing secret, has come to my knowledge, which forces me to quit Orleigh."

"What the deuce is it?"

"I will probably write to you, my lord, about it when I am away."

"It is a secret then, between you and me, and—any one else?"

"It is a secret that concerns me most closely, and indeed, others beside me. But, no doubt, your lordship has divined to what I allude."

Lord Lamerton turned hot and cold. Now Arminell's mysterious words recurred to his memory. What had her meaning been? Was the tutor referring to the same matter? Had that headstrong girl thrown herself into his arms, protesting that she loved him? Very likely. She was capable of doing such a thing. What else could she have meant? What else could induce the young man to go precipitately?

Lord Lamerton hesitated a moment what to say, looking down, and knitting his brows.

"You have, my lord, I can see, guessed to what I refer. It is not a matter on which we can speak together. It would be too painful. Each of us would rather say nothing on a very distressing matter. Let what has passed suffice for the present. I am sure, my lord, that you can understand my motives in desiring to leave promptly."

"'Pon my soul, I think I do. Dash it, I do!"

"Then, my lord, you will not desire to retain me in Orleigh any longer?"

"No—for God's sake, go. I respect you. You are behaving aright. I am sorry, I am ashamed, but there, there, you are acting properly. I will not say another word. Go

where you like, and always look to me as your friend, nay, as taking almost a fatherly interest in you."

He held out his hand, caught that of young Saltren and pressed it, then left the room for his wife's boudoir.

"Julia," said he, in an agitated tone, "things are worse than we imagined. I thought nothing of it, but you women have eyes where men are blind."

"What has happened?"

"Armie—good heavens!—Armie has offered herself to young Saltren, and he, like a gentleman, like a true, honourable gentleman, has asked me to let him go, because he cannot remain here any longer, under the circumstances."

"Did he tell you this?"

"Not in so many words, but there was no mistaking his meaning. Of course he felt a delicacy—he did not like to say how—but, there, there! I shall be angry again. Ah, that girl! Armie is well off, has her mother's fortune; he knows that, but was not to be dazzled. He sees what is right to be done, and does it. Hah! There comes Macduff. I see him in the drive. I'll have the masons at once, this morning, and tear down Patience Kite's cottage."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A HANDLE TO THE ENEMY.

WHEN Lord Lamerton decided that a thing was to be done, he liked to have it done at once, and now that he was thoroughly roused, he would brook no delay in the matter of Patience Kite's cottage.

Mrs. Kite had baffled the authorities. There was no question that her house was unfit to be inhabited by a human being, and that her life was not safe in it. A heavy gale might bring the roof and chimney down on her in her bed and bury her. The relieving officer had complained and remonstrated. The sanitary officer had viewed the ruin and had condemned it. Mr. Macduff had ordered Mrs. Kite to put the cottage in repair. She did nothing, and apparently nothing could be done with her. She absolutely refused to leave her cottage, and to put it in habitable condition was beyond her power. If this case had occurred anywhere in Europe except in England, the police would have made short work with Mrs. Kite, but in England, every man's house is his castle, in whatever condition the house may be. Now, had a drain from Mrs. Kite's hovel proved a nuisance to neighbours, she could have been dealt with, but she had no drains at all ; and her roof threatened no one but herself. The authorities had necessarily consumed much time over Mrs. Kite, and all to no purpose. The sanitary officer complained to the board

of guardians a month after viewing and condemning the house. The guardians waited another month and then waited on the magistrates in petty sessions to issue an order to Mrs. Kite to vacate her cottage. The order was issued and served. Another month passed, and Mrs. Kite had not budged. At the next petty sessions enquiry was made whether any further steps could be taken. It appeared that Mrs. Kite was liable to a fine of ten shillings for every day she remained after the order had been served, but, as the sergeant of police observed to the magistrates, all her goods, if sold, would not fetch ten shillings, and the clerk of the court could find no precedent for evicting the old woman ; all that could be done would be to sell her goods, but that was the limit of their power.

She was, it was true, by her tenure, bound to keep the house in good order, and accordingly Lord Lamerton, as lord of the manor, demanded this, but she did nothing. It was true that he might, in the event of a tenant neglecting to fulfil the stipulation, order the repair, and distrain on the tenant for the costs. But Mrs. Kite was not worth distraining, and the house was not worth rebuilding. No one, after the old woman's death, would care to live in such a lonely spot. To rebuild, would cost a hundred and fifty or two hundred pounds. However, rather than that the scandal should continue, Lord Lamerton resolved to rebuild, when he learned that legally he might not pull down without rebuilding. So Mrs. Kite was about to put his lordship to the cost of nearly two hundred pounds to save her life in her own despite. We have odd ways of doing things in England.*

The news that Mrs. Kite's house was to be pulled about her ears rapidly spread through the village, and many people

* As already said, this is an actual case. The magistrates' order was issued in February 1887, and has been defied to present date, September 1889.

assembled to see the ejection of the hag and the demolition of roof and chimney.

Mrs. Kite was a personage not a little dreaded ; she was what is called a wise-woman ; she was consulted when any of the cottagers were ill. The medical man was sent for reluctantly, and little trust was put in his medicines, but the wise-woman enjoyed the fullest confidence. To meddle with her was a dangerous matter. She used her powers for good, but it was quite possible for her to employ them otherwise. No one cared to provoke her. Every one desired to stand on good terms with her. Before the rector and Mrs. Cribbage, and my lady and the Macduffs, the villagers spoke disparagingly of Patience Kite, but among themselves they regarded her with respect.

Some ill would come of this action of Lord Lamerton, they argued ; he might be a great man, but there are things with which the greatest cannot cope. Ill would come of it ; how, no one could say, but somehow, all agreed, it would come. Had not Patience's uncle beaten her when she was a child, and his house had been burnt down ? True, folks said that Patience had fired it, and true it was she had been sent to prison on that account ; but it was said she had done it only because they could not otherwise account for the fire. There was Farmer Worth called her an ugly name once, when she asked for skimmed milk, and sure enough his cows had dropped their calves after till he got a goat to run along with them. Moreover, the villagers argued, why should a woman be ejected from her house ? Her father had built the cottage, and it was on three lives, his, his wife's and child's, and now it was Patience's as long as the breath was in her. If she chose to keep it in bad repair that was her look-out. Because a woman wore rags, was that a reason why Lord Lamerton and Mr. Macduff should pull her gown off her back ? Because she had a bad tooth or two in her head, had they any right to knock

out all the sound teeth in her jaw? Because she had not patent-leather dancing-pumps, was she to be forced to go barefoot? Because she didn't keep her hair over tidy, was that a reason why she should have her head shaved? Lord Lamerton had no right to interfere. England is a free country, in which folks may act as they like, and live as they like, so long as they do not interfere with their neighbours, and Mrs. Kite had no neighbours. Her cottage was not within sight of Orleigh Park—it did his lordship no injury. Did Mrs. Kite's kitchen chimney threaten to fall on Lord Lamerton's head? Folks, even lords, have no right to interfere with those who don't interfere with them.

Popular sympathy went altogether with Patience Kite. Perhaps at another time the villagers would have been more disposed to judge reasonably, but at this juncture they were smarting under the sense of wrong caused by the closing of the manganese mine, and were therefore disposed to make common cause with any one against whom his lordship acted with apparent rigour.

When Macduff and his workmen came to the hovel, they found a number of sympathisers assembled, mostly miners out of work and some women.

Outside the cottage sat Thomasine. She had been sent back to her mother from Court farm because of her sprained ankle, which incapacitated her for work. Archelaus Tubb was there also. He, likewise, was out of work—not an unusual condition with him, for he was a bad workman whatever he took up, and got his dismissal wherever he went. The girl was pouting; she had her hands folded in her lap, and her brows bent. She looked wonderfully handsome, with a dash of savagery in her beauty.

Within the house was Mrs. Kite. She had put together her few valuables in an oak chest, and sat on it, near her hearth, with her feet on the hearthstone, and her arms folded. She would not move. The house might be dis-

mantled about her, but there she would remain to the last.

Mr. Macduff entered the cottage, and received a scowl from Thomasine as he passed her. He endeavoured, but in vain, to persuade the woman to come outside.

"But," said Mr. Macduff, "they're about to pu' the roof down over your head."

Mrs. Kite made no answer.

Then he became angry, and ordered two masons to enter the ruin and remove the old woman; but this they were afraid to do. They pretended that the reason was lest she should bring an action against them; really, lest she should "overlook" them; that is, cast an evil eye upon them.

"I'll give half a sovereign to any who will bring her out," offered the agent.

The men shrugged their shoulders, and a miner who was lounging against a tree in the rear muttered, "If you're so anxious to get her out, you and his lordship had best drag her out yourselves."

"Begin with the demolition," ordered Macduff.

The workmen scrambled on the roof, and commenced tearing off the old, thin and rotten thatch, beginning at the end furthest removed from that where the old woman sat.

A few groans and exclamations of "shame!" issued from the lookers-on.

As the thatch was being riven away, plaster from the rotten ceiling fell, and with it drifts of straw, into the cottage. Dust rose, thick and blinding, but Mrs. Kite refused to stir. She would stifle there rather than desert her hearth.

Again Macduff went to the door to expostulate. The woman answered with a snarl, as a wild beast worried in its lair.

"Go on," shouted Macduff to the men.

Then suddenly a tie-beam gave way, and fell through, with a crash, to the cottage floor.

Immediately ensued a rush of lookers-on to the cottage door and windows, but the dust drove out in their faces, thick as steam, preventing them from seeing anything. But, though Patience could not be seen, her voice was heard muttering behind the fog of lime and dust of rotten wood.

Macduff did not relish his task. Lord Lamerton was not present; he had gone to a ploughing match, where he was to distribute the prizes. If my lord had been at home, the agent would have asked for further directions; but, as he was away, he felt bound to proceed according to his orders.

The workmen engaged on the roof now discovered that their lunch hour had arrived, and they descended the ladders with alacrity to regale themselves on the cake and cold tea they had brought with them.

The pause allowed the dust to clear away, and Macduff, looking through the doorway, descried Mrs. Kite, powdered with lime, her hair almost white, still crouched on her box in the same place, resting her chin in her hands, and her elbows on her knees.

What was he to do? He bit his lips, and swore in broad Scotch. The masons were eating and joking among themselves. The miners were muttering.

Leisurely—before Macduff had decided on a course, and reluctantly, the masons refolded their bundles, and returned to the ladders.

“Rip off the straw,” said the agent, “but be varry careful not to disturb the principals. If the old creature finds she has nae cover o’er her head when the rain comes, maybe she’ll depart of her own accord.”

The stripping off of the thatch was resumed, and the dust fell thicker over the part of the room where Mrs. Kite sat; it poured out of every opening, it rose from where the roof had been torn; the cottage resembled a smoking dung-hill, and the cloud spread over and enveloped the whole

clearing, powdering grass and bushes, and the coats and boots of the spectators.

All at once, a shout from a mason, then a crash. He had been astride on a principal when it had given way and the man had fallen through the ceiling into the room beneath, tearing down the laths and plaster with him. He was not injured, he came forth a moment later, coughing and sneezing, as dusty as a miller, and was saluted with laughter.

"Halloo there!" shouted Macduff. "The roof is going."

The failure of one principal entailed the fall of the rest; they were dragged out of place; they slanted on one side, parted from the chimney, but remained on the walls, inclined.

Thomasine, alarmed for her mother's safety, now clung to the door, and cried to her to come forth. She could see nothing for the cloud that filled the cottage. Thomasine, lamed by her sprained ankle, stood at the door and limped painfully a step forward.

"Oh, Arkie! Arkie!" she cried, appealing to her lover, "do run in and force mother to come out."

"But she will not come," remonstrated he.

Another shout—now of dismay.

"The chimney! the chimney!"

A crack had suddenly revealed itself. The rotten loosely-compacted wall had parted.

"It will be down in a minute! save her!"

"Five—I mean one sovereign to any who will bring her out," shouted Macduff.

Then Thomasine grasped Archelaus' shoulder. "Come," she said, "I will go—help, we must save her."

"I will do it," said the lad, and plunged into the cottage.

For a moment every one held his breath. Thomasine limped away from the doomed cottage. All heard the young fellow's voice shouting to Mrs. Kite.

Then, suddenly, the whole chimney came down with a rush. It was as though it had closed into itself like a telescope. A dull, heavy thud, muffled by the dense enveloping fog of dust, was heard, and then volumes of yellow smoke-like fumes poured out in gushes and spirals, and rose in a column above the cottage.

Dense though the cloud was, in through it rushed the men, stumbling over heaps of stone, and choking in the thick air, but saw nothing whatever, could see nothing; and came forth coughing, rubbing their eyes, half suffocated, half blinded.

Nothing could be done, the extent of the mischief could not be discovered till the volumes of fine powder, pungent as snuff, had been given time to clear away, at least partially.

Now Macduff plunged in, and stumbled against Thomasine weeping and wringing her hands, blindly groping in the opaque atmosphere, thick as soup. "My mother! My Arkie! They are both dead! Both taken from me!"

"Stand aside!" shouted the agent. "What creatures these women are." He coughed and growled. "If anything has happened, it is her fault, she was warned. But the blame will be put on me." Then he shouted, "Tubb! Tubb! Mrs. Kite!" but received no answer.

In at the door came the men again, miners and masons together, and by crouching they obtained clearer air, and were better able to see. The fallen chimney formed a great heap, and the ruins were spread over the whole floor; but how high the heap rose they were unable to distinguish, for the dust-mist hung about it, dense, impenetrable, disclosing only, and that indistinctly, the base of the mound.

Then a cry from Thomasine. She had clasped a hand that protruded from the rubbish pile.

"It is Arkie! It is Arkie!" she cried. "He is dead, he has been killed."

"Run," ordered Mr. Macduff. "Run, some of you fellows, for picks."

"If he's dead, you've killed 'n," growled a miner. "That is—you and my lord." The man went forth, whilst the rest, crouching, wiping their eyes on their cuffs, and wiping the dust into them, clearing their throats and choking again, began to pull the stones away. But the chimney had been built of as much clay as stone. Though so close to a lime-kiln, little lime had been used in its construction, and the slaty stone itself corroded by weather and the lime which had lain between its films in the quarry had dissolved to black powder. A pick did not suffice to remove the rubbish, shovels were required as well. The dust did not disperse, every upturn of the heap sent forth fresh volumes mingled with soot; but many hands were now engaged, and in ten minutes Archelaus Tubb had been extracted, and was carried forth and laid on the turf outside.

He was so covered with dust that he looked as if made of dark earth, all of one colour—face, hair, clothing, hands.

"Run for a doctor," called Macduff. "Where is he to be taken to? Go on some of you turning over the heap. Look for Mrs. Kite, she must be there. Confound the obstinacy of the woman. I shall be blamed for this, of course. Always so. The saddle put on the wrong horse. Some of you get water, and wash his face, and see where the lad is hurt. Please stand back, Thomasine, you can do no good. I will go back and help to find Mrs. Kite. Why the de'il could she not have come forth when bidden? She had warning enough given her." Then he returned to the cottage. He was now himself so covered with dust that the natural colour of his face and the tincture of his garments could not be distinguished. Looking up from inside the cottage was like looking into a London fog. There was a great gap where the chimney had stood, the roof was

stripped of its covering and the principals were inclined out of their proper positions.

"Well," said Macduff. "Have you come on her?"

"We haven't come on nothing but Arkie Tubb," answered one of the men. "There's a lot of rummage more to be cleared away."

"Look sharp about it," said the agent. "If she be buried, the only chance of life for her is to be dug out at once."

"Not much chance of life, then," said one of the men.

A quarter of an hour passed, and Patience had not been exhumed.

A diversion of interest was caused by the arrival of the surgeon. He examined the young man, and pronounced that, though he was not dead, he was so injured that he could not live beyond an hour.

The last heap of fallen chimney-ruin had been cleared away, and Mrs. Kite had not been found.

"She has been spirited away," said the men. "We always knew she was a wise woman."

"I wouldn't have had this happen," growled Macduff, "not for ten pounds—I mean, two pounds ten. What a handle this will give to the enemy!"

CHAPTER XXV.

BAMBOOZLED.

LORD LAMERTON was that day engaged in distributing prizes at a ploughing match, about fifteen miles away from Orleigh.

"My dear," said he to his wife before he started, "for goodness' sake come with me into the avenue, and give me the heads of what I am to say."

Report had it that his lordship got all his speeches from his wife, and report was not far wrong in so saying.

"I'll run up to Eggins," he said, "and get him to give me some wrinkles about ploughing. I know nothing concerning it."

Thus primed, partly by one of his farmers and partly by his wife, his lordship started for the ploughing match; and on reaching the ground inspected the furrows with his glass to his eye, and repeated some of the scraps of information he had gathered from Eggins.

After that came the dinner, and after the dinner the prize distribution, and a speech from Lord Lamerton.

His lordship stood up, and coughed. He was not a fluent speaker, nor a ready speaker; indeed he could not speak at all unless he had been given time and opportunity to get primed. But he had a retentive memory, and when allowance was made for hesitation, and repetition, and occasional halts, his speeches were admitted to be not so

bad as are the generality of such performances. They read well ; only it was a little irritating to listen to them. The hearer never could be sure that his lordship would not break down altogether. Speaking made him and his audience hot. They perspired sympathetically. It made him uncertain what to do with his legs, and those listening to his words found their attention drawn away to his inferior members, and were kept in suspense as to what he would do next with his extremities. Sometimes he endeavoured to stand on one foot, and then he invariably lost his balance, and grabbed at the table-cloth, or a lady's bonnet to stay himself from falling. On such an occasion he lost the thread of his discourse, and had to seek it in his pocket-handkerchief, whilst those listening good-naturedly stamped and rapped the table, and shrieked "Hear, hear !"

Sometimes he curled one leg round the other in such a manner that to recover himself he was obliged to face about, and he found himself addressing the latter part of a sentence to the waiter and the tent wall behind him, instead of the audience at the table. It was said that once he put his foot into his plate on the table, but this was an exaggeration ; he caught himself about to do it and desisted in time.

How is it that the Englishman is so poor a speaker ? I believe that the language is partly the cause. The English tongue is so simple in its structure that it runs out of the mouth faster than the ideas it is supposed to express have taken shape in the brain. Consequently we males, sometimes women even, say things before we have thought them out, and then are embarrassed because the thought lags behind the word, like the thunder after the flash.

In such a language as the German, however, the mind has to formulate the sentence in all its ramifications and subsidiary articulations, before it is uttered. The idea is kneaded, and squeezed into a shape and then baked. A

tap, and out of the buttered mould comes the sentence, compact and complete, whereas, in English, the idea is not given time to set, it is not even half baked, and then it is shaken out, and falls to pieces as it appears ; or like an ill-set jelly, resolves into an insipid wash.

When Lord Lamerton rose to his feet, he proceeded to blow his nose loudly, then he looked about him, and his face glowed redly. He caught the eye of the Rector of Orleigh, and he said to himself: "Deuce take the fellow, he will know whence I got this speech. He was discussing the matter with my lady the other day."

He arranged his legs as best he could to support his superincumbent weight, and to make quite sure of not losing his balance laid his hand on the back of a chair. Then he put the other hand into his pocket.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "I am not the sort of man you should have chosen to speak to you to-day, because——"

Interruptions of "No, no !"

"Because, if you allow me, I am not in the best of moods. I have had an attack, a damned—I beg your pardon, a dastardly attack made on me in the public papers, and I have been—I have been represented—that is, represented as a monster of iniquity, one who is ruining the country, and driving trade out of it."

"No, no !"

"I was never more astonished and shocked in my life. I did think, gentlemen and ladies, that, if there was one thing I cherished and loved, and strove to live for, it was—that is to say—it was my country, and next to my country, my dear old—my dear old mother country."

General emotion, and some of the ladies who had taken more than two glasses of sherry felt the tears rise into their eyes. Every gentleman kindled and stamped and said, "Hear, hear !"

“But,” continued Lord Lamerton, re-adjusting his balance, by putting one foot between the rails of the chair, and the other on the hat of a gentleman, that was on the floor near him, and removing his hand from his trouser to his waistcoat pocket, “but, ladies and gentlemen, I will pass from personal matters to the subject in hand.” (Then, to himself, “Confound the rector, I can see by the twinkle of his eye that he knows what is coming.”) “But, ladies and gentlemen, we are here assembled on an august and interesting occasion, perhaps one of the most august and interesting that could have arisen—I mean, I mean, a ploughing-match. And this recalls me to the fact that one of our earliest English poets, William Langland, who lived in the reign of Richard II., wrote an entire poem on—what do you suppose? Ploughing. He entitled his poem, ‘The Vision of Piers the Ploughman.’ And what would you think, gentlemen and ladies, was the drift of this remarkable composition? We know that long before, centuries earlier, Virgil wrote his ‘Georgics,’ in praise of agriculture, but here, our English poet confined himself to one branch of agriculture, and that, ploughing. And the author represents all men—mark me—*all* men, as ploughmen, all, from the king on his throne and the parson in the pulpit, to the least among us all, as ploughmen set to make our furrows in the great field of the world. And, ladies and gentlemen, each has his own proper furrow to run, and he may make it well, or make it badly, plough deep, or merely skirt the soil, plough straight, or run a feeble, fluttering, irregular line, or he may even fold his hands, and take a snooze in the hedge, and make no attempt to plough.”

A pause: the gentleman whose hat had been converted into a footstool recovered the crushed article from under the foot of the speaker, and cast at him a melancholy, reproachful glance.

“I beg your pardon, ’pon my soul, I did not mean it. I

did not observe it." This was said aside to the sufferer. Then after a complete rearrangement of his attitude, with his legs very wide apart, like that of the Colossus of Rhodes, Lord Lamerton continued, "Ladies and gentlemen! I am much afraid that some of us—I will not say all—for I do not believe it is true of all—I say some of us, and God knows, I include myself, on looking back at our furrows do not find them as we should have wished; do not derive, I mean, much satisfaction in the retrospect; but—but—let me see. Yes!" He leaned both his hands on the table, so that his back was curved, and his position was far from elegant. "But, ladies and gentlemen, the broad fact remains, that we are all ploughboys together, and we must take a lesson from these hearty good fellows we have seen to-day, and in all we do and undertake, make our furrows straight, and drive them deep."

"Hear! Hear! Hear!" and much thumping and stamping; in the midst of which Lord Lamerton sat down, and nearly missed his chair in so doing. Then he leaned over to the rector, and said, "All my lady's; 'pon my soul, all. Never read a line of what's-his-name in my life. She has—she reads everything."

Lord Lamerton returned to Orleigh by an evening train. The station was at some distance from his place. Only when the new line was made would he have a station near at hand.

On reaching the Orleigh road station, the master told him what had occurred during his absence. His carriage was in waiting outside to take him home.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed his lordship. "You don't mean to tell me that Tubb's son is dead, and that the old woman has not been found? Here—" said he to the coachman, "set me down at the Chillacot turn, and drive on. I shall walk home, after I have made enquiries. Deuce take it! I wouldn't have had this happen for all I

am worth. Poor Tubb! He is a workman and will feel the loss of his son, though the fellow was not good for much—I know that I should be horribly cut up if anything were to happen to my cub.”

He threw himself into the carriage, and continued his exclamations of distress and wonder how it could have come about. “Macduff must have gone to work clumsily. Bless the man, he is a machine.”

The carriage stopped.

“Shall I attend you, my lord?” asked the footman at the door, as he held it.

“Attend me! What for? *Me!* I’m going to enquire about the matter, then I shall go on to Tubb’s cottage. Tell my lady not to wait dinner.”

He swung his umbrella, and walked away. He marched to the quarry where had been Patience Kite’s cottage. He thought it possible that some one might still be on the spot, and that there he would learn the latest, fullest and most authentic particulars. That the old woman had been seen crouched at her hearth, that the chimney had fallen upon her, and that she had not been exhumed from the ruins, was to him inexplicable. When he came out on the clearing where the ruins of the cottage stood, Lord Lamerton was surprised to find it occupied by a crowd. A lantern was slung to one of the principals of the roof, above the head of a speaker who occupied a table that had been drawn out of the cottage. That speaker was Mr. James Welsh. Lord Lamerton did not know him by sight, only by reputation.

As my lord appeared on the scene, those there assembled shrank aside, with a look of confusion and shyness. He listened for a moment to the orator, and then proceeded to push his way through the throng, which divided to allow him to pass: and, approaching the table, he said, “I beg your pardon, sir; I have not the honour of knowing your

name ; but you are making pretty free with mine. What is it all about ? ”

“ You are Lord Lamerton, I presume ? ” said the orator, looking at the dismayed faces of those within the radiance of the lantern. “ The saying goes that listeners hear no good of themselves. Perhaps it may be true in this case. ”

“ I have not been listening, but I have caught a sentence or two ; and I have no idea of allowing any one taking liberties with my name behind my back. If you have anything to say about me, say it to my face. What is all this about ? ”

“ What is all this about ? ” repeated the orator. “ His noble lordship, the Right Honourable Giles Inglett, Baron Lamerton, asks, What is all this about ? ” In a lower tone charged with oratorical irony, “ *What* is all this about ? ” Mr. Welsh looked round on his audience. “ Having shut up his manganese mine, and reduced a hundred men to destitution, broken up their homes, obliged them to wander over the face of the earth in quest of work, without houses of their own, without bread to put into the mouths of their children, forced to sell their poor sticks of furniture down to the baby’s cradle—he asks, What is all this about ? After having torn down a house over the head of a poor widow, and bespattered her grey hairs with gore, he asks, What is all this about ? After having deprived a father of his only child, and an orphan of her mother, he has the effrontery—yes—in the face of his lordship I repeat the word, I repeat it in the boldness which my righteous indignation gives me—the effrontery to ask, What is all this about ? Possibly, when Cain saw his brother, his younger brother Abel, lying at his feet, with fractured skull and crushed limbs, he also asked, What is all this about ? I will not pretend to know where his lordship has been all day ; but I do say that, as an Englishman, as a Christian, as a man, when he was about to render desolate the heart

of a father by taking the life of his only son, and of a child by bereaving her of her mother, when he was about to tear the roof off from over the head of the widow and the fatherless, he should have been *here*, yes, here and not far away—Heaven knows where—in what scene of riot and revelry, into which decent folk like us would not venture to look.”

“Now come,” said Lord Lamerton, “this is all rubbish. I have been at a ploughing match. I want to know what you are doing here. Who the deuce are you?”

“My lord,” said the orator, “I am—I rejoice to say it—one of the People, one of the down-trodden and ill-treated, the excluded from the good things of life. My heart, my lord, beats in the right place. Where yours is, my lord, it is not for me, it is for your own conscience to decide. But mine, mine—is in the right place. I am one of the people, and, my lord, let me inform you that when you insult me, you insult the entire people of England; you bespatter not me only, but the whole of that enlightened, hearty, intelligent people, of whom I see so many noble, generous specimens before me—you bespatter them, I repeat, my lord, you bespatter them in the grossest and most unwarranted fashion—with dirt.”

“’Pon my soul,” interrupted Lord Lamerton, rapping on the table, “I can make no heads nor tails out of all this. If you have anything against me, say it out. If you want anything, tell it me plainly. I am not unreasonable, but I’m not going to stand here and listen to all this rigmarole.”

“Perhaps, my lord, you are not aware, that there are many grievances under which the Public, the PUBLIC, my lord, are groaning. Shall I begin with the lighter, and proceed to the graver, or reverse the process?”

“As you please. It is one to me.”

“Very well,” said Welsh. He looked round complacently on his audience, and rubbed his hands. “His

lordship, in all simplicity of heart, wants to know what occasion he has given for this indignation. What occasion," with a chuckle, and those who could see his face and catch his tone chuckled also. "What occasion," with sarcasm, and his audience felt their gall rise. "What occasion," in a hollow thrilling tone, and the crowd responded with a groan. "Shall we tell his lordship? We will, and we will begin with some of the lighter grievances, heavy in themselves, but light in comparison with the others. In the first place, what does he mean by throwing open the grounds on a Tuesday, a day when the public, as he knows, the hard-working public which needs relaxation and the sight of the beautiful, cannot enjoy the boon? Is that, I ask, a day when the shops are closed? Is it a day when the sons of toil in our cities can get away from their labours and admire the beauties of nature, and the charms of art? It is not. The grounds are thrown open on Tuesdays, with almost fiendish malevolence, and the cunning of the serpent, that his lordship may obtain the credit of liberality, whilst doing nothing to deserve it. The true public are excluded by the selection of the day, but the gentle-folks, the parsons, the squires, and all the do-nothings, to whom one day is as another, they can see Orleigh Park on Tuesdays. If Lord Lamerton had in him any true humanity, any sympathy for the tradesman, for the clerk, for the milliner and the seamstress, he would open on—let us say Saturday."

"Very well," said Lord Lamerton, "I have no objection in the world, except that it will give the gardeners more to do, picking up the papers and scraps—henceforth the grounds shall be open to the public on Saturdays."

"But, my lord, are the pictures and statuary and other works of art to be shown only to the aristocratic eye, and are they to be carefully kept within closed doors from the profane gaze of what you contemptuously call—The Common People?"

“Not at all,” said Lord Lamerton. “I will order that the state apartments be opened on Saturdays—though, Lord knows, above a questionable Van Dyck, there are no great shakes in the way of pictures there. Is that all?”

“That is not all,” proceeded Mr. James Welsh. “Lord Lamerton innocently—I will not say, sheepishly—asks, Is that all? No, I reply, and I reply as the mouth-piece of all present, as the shout of the democracy of England. It is not all. It is very far from being all. Is that all? he asks, standing before you, out of whose mouths he has snatched the crust of bread, the staff of life. Is that all? When he closes the manganese mine, and throws almost the entire population of Orleigh out of employ, and scatters them everywhere, hungry, homeless, forlorn.”

“Now, this a trifle too extravagant,” said Lord Lamerton. “The mine would have gone under my house and brought it down. Why, it would have cost me twenty thousand pounds to rebuild the house.”

“You hear that! Twenty thousand pounds which might have been spent in Orleigh is refused the people. Twenty thousand pounds! How many able-bodied men are there in Orleigh? About two hundred. What might you not have done with a hundred pounds each? What comforts might you not have provided yourselves with? But his lordship buttons up his pockets. Look upon yourselves, each of you, as defrauded of a hundred pounds. My lord will bank his twenty thousand. He does not want it. He hoards it. He fossilizes it. There is a fable about a dog in the manger which snarled at the horses that wanted to eat out of that manger which was of no use at all to the hound.”

Then Lord Lamerton raised his voice, and said, “My good friends, I don’t believe you are so weak as to be gulled by these fallacies. Why should I allow my house to be undermined and rattled down about my ears, if I can help it?”

A voice from the throng shouted, "Good for trade."

"Some one has said," continued Lord Lamerton, "some one has remarked that it would be good for trade. I dispute this. I deny it energetically. I say that it would cost me twenty thousand pounds to rebuild the place, but I do not say that—if ousted by the manganese mine, I would rebuild it. Why should I? If I built on any rock, how could I tell but that some vein of metal would again be found under it, and then I might be driven away once more. Or if I built on clay, some company might insist on exploring the clay for aluminium; or if I built on gravel, it might be insisted on to under-dig me for coprolites, for the formation of artificial manure. Why, I say, should I risk my twenty thousand pounds when my very foundations are no security for the outlay? I would say to myself: As there is no security any where, I will spend my twenty thousand pounds in amusing myself on the Continent, on personal jewellery—or God knows what selfish luxuries. Security of property, unassailability of right of property, that is the basis of all prosperity in trade. Touch property, and down goes trade with it. Look at the Jews in past times. They had no security, so they hoarded, and never spent a farthing they could not help. They did nothing for trade with their wealth. Touch property, and no one with money will do other than did the Jews. Touch property and down goes trade." Lord Lamerton thumped the table. "Now look here, I don't want to be hard on any one. I have lost a great deal of money already on the manganese, which has not paid for these five years, but has been worked at a dead loss. I don't see my way to lose more, and to endanger, moreover, the walls of my house. That is plain sense. But as I say, I won't be hard on any one. If the miners cannot get work elsewhere, I'll set them road-making. They can cut a new road as soon as ever it is settled where the station is to be, and hedge and

stone it. That will cost me a thousand pounds, if it will cost me a penny."

"Just listen to this proposal," shouted Welsh, who found that the plain sense of Lord Lamerton was producing some effect. "You hear his lordship's magnanimous offer. He will take you honest, hearty, active mining fellows and debase you to stone-breakers by a road-side. He has had such experience in heart-breaking, that he thinks to set you a job that commends itself to his fancy—stone-breaking. But let us pass from this. I have not done with my noble lord yet. Not by any means. The last of his misdeeds is not yet quite exhausted. I want to ask the Right Honourable Baron Lamerton how it is that he is so sensitive about the tumbling down of his own house, and so ready by the hands of his Macduffs and other minions to tear down the walls of the widow's cottage? I ask him that. See—he is confounded, he cannot answer." Welsh looked round triumphantly. "Nor is that all," he pursued; "I have another question to put, to which also, I have no doubt, I shall meet with silence only as an answer. His lordship who is so touchy about the rights of property is, I suspect, only touchy about the rights of his *own* property. I have it on the best possible authority that he is threatening to dispossess a man whom we all esteem, Captain Saltren, to dispossess him of his house and land, a house built by his father and repaired and beautified by himself. I believe I am not wrong in saying that he has threatened to employ law against our valued friend, Captain Saltren."

A cry of "Shame, shame!"

"Yes," pursued the orator, "it is shame. What was that his lordship said just now about rights of property? Touch property, he insisted, and down goes trade. Who is touching property? Who but he? Who lays his envious grasp—he, Ahab, on the vineyard of the poor Naboth."

Then the orator jumped off the table, and in a changed

tone said to Lord Lamerton, "I must be off and report this meeting. I've a train to catch. Give you a leader on it, old cock. No offence meant; none I hope taken. Both of us men of the world, and know how to live by it. I know as well as you what is gammon, but gammon is the staple diet of the chawbacon. Give us your hand." He nudged the nobleman in the side. "Bamboozled, my lord, eh? I am James Welsh. Pretty considerably bamboozled, eh?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

DUMFOUNDERED.

WHEN James Welsh sprang from the table, and held out his hand, Lord Lamerton was in that condition of bamboozlement that he did not know what to do, whether to mount the table and address the audience, or to walk away; whether to accept the proffered hand, or to refuse it. He felt as does a boy who has been blindfolded and set in the midst of a room to be spun about, struck, and bidden catch his persecutors, but who finds himself unable to touch one.

Whatsoever he said was caught from his lips and converted into a fresh charge against him: every kindness he proposed was perverted into an act of barbarity.

And then—after he had been thus treated, his persecutor bounced down before him, and in the most cheery tone in the world, declared that no offence was intended, asked him if he were bamboozled, and invited him to shake hands. Lord Lamerton was no match for his assailant. He was not a ready man. When he had been primed by his wife, or after laborious preparation, he was able to produce the collected matter, but neither smoothly nor naturally. His sentences came from him as liquid issues from a barrel unprovided with a vent. They flowed for a while, then stopped, and a gulp ensued; after that a drop or two; another gulp, and then a rush of words forming a sentence,

or, more probably, a sentence and a half. An interruption confused Lord Lamerton, a question silenced him. He was deficient in precisely those qualities which Mr. Welsh possessed in perfection—ready wit, assurance, bluntness of feeling, qualities essential to the successful orator. Welsh knew exactly how to keep in touch with his audience, he could gauge their ignorance at a glance, and would always accommodate himself to their capacity. He had unbounded audacity, because utterly without scruple; he had smartness, and skill in parrying.

Lord Lamerton stood back. The night was not dark, but the trees cast shadows about the glade where the meeting was held, and the lantern cast but a feeble light. His movements could be seen only by those who were close to him, and in his condition of bamboozlement, he was glad to take advantage of the opening made in the throng by Welsh, to follow and place himself outside the crowd. He did not leave altogether; he remained to see what would follow, and to gather together his scattered senses. He leaned against the bole of a Scotch pine, and looked on unobserved. Those who had noticed that he had passed through concluded that he had left entirely.

“What a thing it is,” muttered Lord Lamerton, “to have the gift of assurance. That fellow was all in the wrong, and I was all in the right, but I could not explain my right, and he was able to make all I said seem wrong. ’Pon my soul, I don’t believe that he was in earnest, and believed in what he said. I couldn’t do that, God bless me! I couldn’t do that and look my lady in the face again.”

Suddenly Captain Saltren appeared on the table vacated by Welsh. He looked more gaunt, hollow-eyed and pale than usual, but this may have been the effect of the lantern-light falling from above on his prominent features. The moment he appeared he was greeted with clapping of hands and cheers.

As Lord Lamerton looked on, he thought the scene was strangely picturesque, it was like a meeting of old Scotch Covenanters. To the north, the sky was full of twilight, but black clouds drove over it, flying rapidly, though little wind was perceptible below. Against the silvery light rose the well-wooded hill with spires of pine, and larch, and spruce, like one of those fantastic prospects of a mediæval city in Doré's night pictures. In front was the ruined cottage with the yellow lantern, suspended from a projecting beam, and in its radiance the form of the mining captain as wild as the surroundings. Between the looker-on and the table were the figures of men, boys, and some women, partially illumined by the pale twilight from above, partially by the yellow halo of the lantern. Now and then a match was struck, as a man lit his pipe, and then, there was a flare, and the heads that intervened were distinctly seen, black against the momentary flash.

Saltren looked from side to side, and waved his arms. As he did so, the fingers of his right hand came within the direct rays of the lantern, and were seen quivering and in movement as though he were engaged in playing a piece of rapid music on an unseen instrument. And in truth, he was so doing, and doing it unconsciously. From these long, thin, thrilling fingers, invisible threads attached themselves to the nerves of those who stood before him, and before he spoke, before he opened his mouth, a magic, altogether marvellous accord was established between him and those who surrounded him. It is told of St. Anthony of Padua that he was once asked to preach to an audience whose tongue he could not speak, and who understood not a word of Italian. He went up into the pulpit, looked round, and all in the church went into paroxysms of contrition and tears, and—he had not said a word. The secret of this power is intensity of conviction and absolute sincerity. Saltren was convinced and sincere. The look of his face,

the agitation of his limbs, the convulsive movements of his lips all proclaimed his sincerity.

The captain, moreover, was known to all those who now looked up to him, known as a man of probity, true in all he said and just in all he did, a blameless man. But though his blamelessness commanded respect, there was in him something beyond the blamelessness that commanded respect; and that something was his spirituality. Men felt and acknowledged that there existed in him a mysterious link with the unseen world. All, even the dullest, were aware, when speaking with Captain Saltren, that they were in the presence of a man who lived in two worlds, and principally in that which was supersensual and immaterial. He impressed the people of Orleigh—as did Patience Kite—with awe. These two belonged to the same category of beings who lived in an atmosphere of the supernatural; the captain talked with angels, and Patience Kite with, perhaps, devils. The influence exerted was not confined to the ignorant, it extended to those who were partially educated; perhaps he influenced these latter even more than the former. In the general flux and disintegration of belief, those who were most aware of the *débâcle* clung most tenaciously to the skirts of such who still remained convinced. Now Mrs. Kite, however sceptical she might be in religious matters, had no doubt whatever in her own powers, and Captain Saltren was profoundly rooted in his own convictions, and this was the source of the strength of both.

As he stood on the table, his limbs trembled as though he were stricken with the ague, his mouth quivered, sweat streamed from his face. He could not speak, emotion overpowered him. He waved his hands, and his fingers clutched at the air, and he looked nervously from side to side.

A woman screamed, fell on her knees, and shrieked for

mercy. She thought she was at a revivalist meeting, and the movement of Saltren's hands had caught every nerve in her head and had drawn together and knotted them, so that she shrieked with the tension insupportable.

"My friends and fellow sufferers," began Saltren. The cry of the woman had unloosed his tongue, for it proclaimed that sympathy was established between him and his hearers. "I have doubted"—he spoke slowly, in a low tone, with tremor in his tones, and with diffidence—"I have doubted whether I should address you or not. I do not desire to speak. I am held back, and yet I am thrust on. I am like an anchored vessel with the sails spread and the wind filling them. The anchor must part, or the sails be torn to shreds. The anchor is in the earth, the breath of heaven is in the sails. I know which ought to go. But there is strain—great strain;" he paused and passed his hand over his face, and it came away dripping with moisture. "I have no natural gift. I am fearful of myself. I cannot speak as did James Welsh. I am no scholar. I am an ignorant man. But so were the apostles, taken from their nets, and so was Levi taken from the receipt of custom. So was Elisha, drawn from the plough. I hang back. I can say with David, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother."

Then the woman, kneeling, began again to scream, "Lord, have mercy! have mercy!" and her cries assisted in thrilling and exciting the speaker and people alike. Some of the audience began to groan and sigh. One young bumpkin from behind called out, "We don't want no sarmon. If you're going to preach, I'm off." Then ensued a commotion; heads were turned, exclamations of anger and disgust greeted the interruption, and the lad was hustled away.

Saltren resumed his speech, when the interruption was over and quiet restored.

"I am," he said, "a quiet man. I keep to myself and to my own concerns. So was Gideon a quiet man, keeping to himself and his farm. But the spirit of prophecy came on him, and he was summoned to lead the people against Midian, and to smite the enemy hip and thigh, and utterly to destroy them." The tones of his voice became firmer and deeper. His hearers trembled as he trembled, and their hearts quivered with every vibration of his voice.

Lord Lamerton listened with amazement. He and that ploughboy who had called out in mockery were the only two in that assembly who had not fallen under the influence of the orator, one because he was cultivated beyond its reach, the other because he was spiritually sunk beneath it.

The clouds had now formed a black canopy overhead, and as a pause ensued in the address of Saltren, the rush of the wind could be heard in the tree-tops.

"There was neither sword nor spear found among the Israelites," continued Saltren, "and yet they overthrew their enemies, and the way was scattered with their garments and weapons as far as Jordan. I am an ignorant and a foolish man, and yet I am sent to you commissioned from above. I cannot forbear, for I am driven on. Moses was in favour with the Egyptians, and yet he threw away his advantages because of the sighing and the groaning of his people. I have had no favour with the Egyptians, but I have been sent to lead Israel out of captivity. I would keep silence, but I may not. I have had a call as had Jonah, and if I try like him to fly, I shall be brought back. I must deliver my message. If I were sunk in the sea, the sea would throw me up. If I were covered by the mountains falling, I should come forth to proclaim the message. That is why I stand here before you. I have

wrestled with myself. I have shrunk from declaring what I have seen and heard, but if I were to hold my peace, I should be broken as a rotten branch, and be consumed in the fire. Therefore I must speak."

He paused and drew a long breath, and again wiped his brow. All the audience drew a long breath with him. Overhead the wind muttered and puffed, and along the horizon at the back the dark spires bent and righted themselves.

"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day," said Saltren, and at once, as he said the words, the man was changed. His tremors ceased, his knees no longer shook, he stood firm with head erect, and with a face as that of a frozen man and his hands clasped before his breast.

"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day," he repeated. "I was here, hard by, down by the water—no, on the water, in the old quarry, engaged in prayer. Then, suddenly, I saw a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, and I was as one dazzled and in a trance; and I heard a voice, like the voice of a trumpet calling to me, and saying, Saltren, Saltren, Saltren! Then, before I could answer, I saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having a little book in his hand, and he held it aloft, and cried, 'This is the Book of the Everlasting Gospel, this is the truth hid from the earth for ten thousand years, and now at length revealed unto men.' Then I cried, Give me the book. And the angel cast it down, and said, 'This is the Everlasting Gospel, all men are equal, all are the sons of the one Adam, and are children of one family. There shall be no more rich and poor, noble and common; all shall be equal, and so all shall be one.'"

Then some of those who heard, carried away by their emotions, began to leap and hold up their hands, and cry, "Glory, Allelulia!" and the woman on her knees was joined by others who united in cries for mercy. For a few

moments a whirlwind of groans and exclamations and general commotion swept over the assembly, and as suddenly died away again.

"Then," continued Saltren, "Then the angel cast down the book, and it fell into the water, but as it fell I read thereon the title, *The Gilded Clique*. And what, I ask, is the gilded clique, which, like a sponge, sucks in all the wealth of the country and gives nothing back? What is the gilded clique which claims to itself nobility and gentility, and calls us common and unclean? What is the gilded clique which sits alone, firm on its strong foundations struck in the earth, and drives us from place to place in search of work and food? Which denies to all but itself sure and lasting homes, and a certain future? What is the gilded clique which carries corruption into our families, and blights the land with its vices? The gilded clique! Such are they. A handful of dirt! Such are we. But where are truth and righteousness, diligence and honesty to be found? Among them? In the gilded clique? or among us, in the handful of dirt? The day of reckoning is approaching, already has one seal of the seven been unclasped, and I have read what it is to be, and what I have read, that must I proclaim. As I wrestle night and day in prayer, more and more of the contents of the book are disclosed to me. When it fell from heaven, I saw only the cover and what was thereon, but since then, when I am in prayer, I am shown the book and the seals, and one after another is unclosed and I read further. Time will reveal what is now hidden from your eyes. Only have confidence, and look forward."

As Saltren talked, he worked himself out of the constraint with which he had begun, and he spoke easily, fluently, as one inspired, speaking with authority; and his action as he addressed the audience was dignified, serious and easy. His voice was full, deep and sonorous, and his eye flashed

with conscious power. Whilst he was speaking, a few drops of rain began to fall, large and warm ; and the sky overhead was black with cloud. Behind, in the ruined cottage, strange, spectral, blue flashing lights began to play, seen at first on the threshold, then on the hearth, and then dancing from one end to another of the hovel. The course of the flame could not be traced by those without, because the walls intervened, but it was seen quivering at the broken doorway, and then through the shattered window.

Those who stood near the cottage, shrank from it, cowering back, pressing on those behind, leaving a space between them and the table, and the house where these ghostly lights moved about. Saltren alone was unconscious of what passed in the ruin, for his back was to it.

“We have our misery brought home to us,” he continued. “Why are we thrown out of work ? Why am I threatened with having my house taken from me ? Why is this cottage torn down, and the stones cast upon an innocent man to crush the life out of him ? The Lord has suffered all this to come upon us at once, so as to rouse us to a knowledge of the truth revealed to me that all are equal, and in our equality are one ; and that the time has arrived when the poor are to rise and put their feet on the necks of their oppressors. I saw on the cover of that book which descended to me from above the clouds, the head of a man, and the cover was red with blood, and I saw how that that man was handed over first to destruction, the first among many ; and I know how that the heads of those predestined to destruction will appear in order, one after another, on the cover of the book, as the sentence goes forth against each. He who comes first is the chief offender, he who has caused so much woe, he who has destroyed the peace of homes, that one—”

A shout of “Name, name !”

Then, suddenly, from within the ruin flared up a vivid conflagration, golden yellow, so brilliant as to light up the faces of all present turned to the speaker, and convert every leaf of every tree into a flake of gold.

Women shrieked, then were instantaneously hushed, hushed as in death, for, standing on the table behind Saltren, they saw Patience Kite, wild, ragged, with her hair about her shoulders, and an arm extended, pointing. Saltren, also, by the vivid glare, saw Lord Lamerton under the Scotch fir, his face catching full the reflection, as if illumined by the sun.

"Do you ask his name?" he shouted. "He is there." He also pointed, and all the while was unconscious that the wild woman near him was indicating the same man.

Then the whole assembly turned to look, and for a moment saw Lord Lamerton.

For a moment only, for the flame fell, and cries, piercing, thrilling every nerve, distracted the attention of the crowd. A woman had fallen in convulsions on the ground, declaring that she had seen the Devil.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FLOUTED.

LORD LAMERTON put his hand to his head—he could not have spoken if addressed, he was dumfounded. After the assault delivered by James Welsh, he might possibly have blundered through some sort of self-exculpation, but the attack of Captain Saltren was so amazing, so unexpected, so different in kind from anything against which he was armed, that he could not speak, could not utter a syllable.

He was all at once caught by the arm, and saw the faces of Jingles and Arminell.

“My lord,” said young Saltren, hastily, “you must not stay here. The people are incensed, and may do you an injury.”

Lord Lamerton looked from the tutor to his daughter, and then back again. What had brought him there? Why had Arminell thus acted in disobedience to his wishes, and against common decorum? But he said nothing, he was struck dumb. The world was turned upside down, and those who had stood on their feet were now on their heads.

Young Saltren took his arm, and he allowed himself to be led away.

He did not recover at once from his bewilderment. He was as a man stunned. What he had experienced that night was unlike any other experience he had gone through. A sense of helplessness momentarily came upon him, of

inability to resist the forces of fanaticism, unscrupulous partisanship, superstition and prejudice gathered against him. He could neither descend to the personalities and dishonesties of Welsh, nor climb to the fantastic extravagance of Saltren.

Like a plain Englishman he liked to fight face to face with his antagonist on open ground, and on a level, to hit straight before him, and give hard blows ; but he was taken in flank, and bewildered among the tortuous defiles into which he was drawn by Welsh, and unable to touch Saltren who menaced him from aerial heights.

There are two sorts of culture, as there are two eyes and two ears, and two hands, and two feet to every man, and two poles to the globe, and two lights to rule the day and night. But these two cultures are very different in their effects.

The man without intellectual culture has strong opinions, is rugged and angular, and is unable to conceive of the possibility of any qualifications to what he holds as the truth. As he becomes cultivated, he is cut into more facets, and rubbed down, and still further culture makes the angles obtuse and multiplies the facets till finally he loses all angles, and becomes a globe. Friction among his fellowmen has rubbed away every sharpness of opinion, till with perfect culture he ceases to have any opinions at all. Let us put the same fact in another way. The rude man comes out of the dye-vat intense in the colour of his opinions, but every dip he gets in mixed society runs some of his colour out of him, and after having been plunged a good many times in the social wash-tub he ceases to have any distinguishable colour whatever. Intellectual culture makes a man moderate and tolerant, because he becomes indifferent.

Moral culture has an opposite effect. The uncultivated moral faculty is dull, and blunt to discriminate between right and wrong ; the moral palate requires training, for by

nature it tastes only what is crude, and distinguishes sharp extremes. The discipline of life, many a painful experience, and some humiliation, serve to train the moral faculty to nice distinction, and teach it to shrink from the smallest sources of falsehood, to avoid the rank and gross, and to acquire the strictest love of justice. It learns to enjoy the soft velvety port, and to pass the brandied logwood untouched.

Lord Lamerton was a man of double culture. He was not a man of brains, but he was thoroughly scrupulous and honourable, eminently a fair man, and essentially truthful. As such he was incapable of meeting Welsh. His *moral* culture had disarmed him for such a combat. He was like a man called to duel, handling a polished rapier, and engaged with an antagonist armed with a revolver. On the other hand, his *intellectual* culture incapacitated him from meeting Captain Saltren. Such a craze as that of his about a vision of an angel bearing the Everlasting Gospel was a craze and nothing more, undeserving of being argued about, entitling the holder to a cell in Bedlam.

Political unscrupulousness and fanatical unreason were united against him, and although he was aware that they were powerless to injure him, still they might cause him considerable annoyance. It is never pleasant to be on bad terms with neighbours, however removed from them one may be in class and fortune. It is like living in a land haunted by malaria. You are safe on your toft of high land, and look down on the vaporous and poisonous region below, but it hems you in, it interferes with your independence, you have to reckon upon it, and avoid it. To Lord Lamerton it was intolerable to be on other terms than the best with every one, and he was ruffled and hurt by lack of cordiality and want of reciprocity.

How could he bring these misguided people to their senses? It would not do for him to send Macduff among

them. Macduff was a Scotchman, and did not understand the ways of thought of the Southerners. He was himself unable to do anything. He put his hand to his head—he was utterly dumfounded.

All this while he was walking away, led by the tutor, and had his daughter on the other side of him.

Then, abruptly, Lord Lamerton asked, "How long have you been listening to that—to—I mean—him?"

"O, papa, we have only just arrived, as dinner is over," answered Arminell. "I heard from Mr. Saltren that there was to be a meeting of protest at the ruined cottage, and I persuaded him to accompany me to it. But we came late—and now the rain has begun to pour down, it will disperse the assembly."

"Did you know I was here?"

"No—I heard you had walked on to Captain Tubb's house to make enquiries."

Lord Lamerton disengaged his arm from that of Jingles, who still held it, and said, "Mr. Saltren, your way lies to Chillacot. You are no doubt going to your father, and will be glad to remain with him. I will give orders that your clothes and other possessions be removed to-morrow. Things necessary for the night shall be sent at once."

"My lord!"

"I wish you a very good evening, Mr. Saltren, and a good-bye."

Then Lord Lamerton took his daughter's arm, and walked hastily away. The rain was beginning to fall heavily.

He said nothing more for some distance, and Arminell remained silent. But when the park gates were reached, he spoke, and his voice shook as he did so.

"Arminell, this is too bad, this is direct and deliberate revolt. It is not enough for me to be attacked from without, but I must encounter treason in the camp."

"I will not pretend to misunderstand you, papa," said

Arminell. "You are annoyed at my coming out at night with Mr. Saltren—with Giles senior."

"Arminell!"

"I am sorry to have caused you annoyance, but, papa, in the first place I was desirous of seeing the meeting, and hearing what was said at it, and of judging for myself."

"Of hearing your own father abused, insulted and denounced."

"Not exactly that, papa; but surely there is wrong on both sides."

"And you constituted yourself judge over your father!"

"No, papa, I wished to hear what was said, and I asked—you know whom I mean—to come with me. It may possibly have been indiscreet."

"Not merely indiscreet, but wrong, for it was an act of deliberate, wilful disobedience to the wishes of your father, plainly expressed."

"I do not wish to vex and disobey you, papa, but I will exercise my independence and judgment. I cannot allow myself to be cooped in the cage of proprieties. I must see what is going on, and form my own opinions."

"Very well—you shall go to your Aunt Hermione. Your step-mother is not good enough for you. I—your father—am not good enough for you. We are all too strait-laced, too tied hand and foot by the laces of respectability, to serve as guide or check on such a headstrong piece of goods as yourself. You go to Hermione next week."

"I do not wish to go to her. I dislike her. I detest the sort of life led in her house, a life utterly hollow, frivolous and insincere."

"She is a woman of the world."

"A woman of the world that is passing away. I am standing with one foot on a world that is coming on, and I will not step back on to the other."

"You go to Aunt Hermione," said Lord Lamerton peremptorily. He was losing his temper.

"How long am I to be with her?"

"That depends. Your mother has written to ask her to receive you for six months."

"Six months!" Arminell disengaged herself from her father. "Six months is an eternity. I cannot! I will not submit to this. I shall do something desperate. I detest that old Hermione. Her voice grates on my nerves, her laugh raises my bad passions. I can hardly endure her for six days. Her good nature is imbecility itself, and provokes me; her vanity makes her ridiculous. I cannot, in deed, I will not go to her."

"You must, Armie! It is my wish—it is my command."

"But not for six months. Six weeks is the outside of my endurance."

"Armie, I heartily wish that there were no necessity for parting with you at all, but you have given me and your mother such cause for anxiety, and such pain, that we have concluded together that it is best for you and us to be separated for a while. You, I have said, give me pain, especially now at a time when I am worried by external troubles. I cannot force you to go to your aunt's, nor force you to remain there longer than you choose, but you know my intentions, and they are for your good, and our own relief."

"Am I such an annoyance to you?" asked Arminell, in a subdued tone.

"Of course, with your waywardness, and open defiance of our authority, you are. You have made me—let alone my lady—very unhappy. You have set yourself up to disagree with us at every point, to run counter to all our wishes, and to take up with persons with whom we disapprove of your associating."

"I give you pain, papa?"

"Very much pain indeed."

"And you think it would make you happier if I left Orleigh, and that it would also be better for me?"

"I do, indeed."

"And six months, you suppose, will cure me of my wilfulness?"

"I do not say that; that depends on yourself."

"Anyhow, for six months you will have ease of mind if I am away from you, and in good hands?"

"In good hands, certainly. Hermione's house is a very suitable school. You will there be brought to understand that deference is due to your superiors, consideration for the feelings of others, respect for opinions that differ from your own, and especially that regard is to be had for *les convenances*, without which social life would go to pieces, as a chain of pearls that has lost its connecting links. *Les convenances* may be, and indeed are, in themselves nothing, but they hold society together. You have been left too much to yourself or with unsatisfactory governesses. You must be taught your proper place. You must go into the stream of social life, and feel the current and its irresistible force."

"Very well, papa, I will go."

"Your aunt will be sure to write to-day; we shall have a letter to-morrow."

Arminell said nothing. Her brows were knit and her lips set.

"I am sorry we have to give up the trip to Switzerland; it might have been pleasant, had we been all together, but I must deny myself that. The Irish property has brought in nothing; and I have lost money in other ways; now I must set the men to work on the new road—that is, if they will condescend to make it."

On reaching the house, Lord Lamerton went at once to

the drawing-room, and caught his wife dozing over a magazine. He put his hand on her shoulder, and said,

"Julia !"

She started, and dropped her book.

"Oh, you are back at last ! Have you had anything to eat?"

"More than I am able to digest, my dear."

"How did the speech succeed ? You remembered Langland's date, I hope ?"

"My dear, I have heard too many speeches to-day to remember anything about my own—that is to say, yours. I have had three—one from Mr. Welsh, one from Captain Saltren, and one from Arminell, and upon my soul, I do not know which was the most unpleasant. Do you know where Arminell has been since dinner ?"

"In her room, I suppose."

"No ; she has been out—with Jingles."

"Never !"

Her ladyship looked blank.

"It is a fact. She went with him to a meeting held by the malcontents against me ; went to hear what they had to say against her own father, and went with that fellow with whom you had cautioned her not to be seen, and whom I had forbidden to associate with her."

"Good gracious ! how improper."

"The girl is unmanageable. However, I have got her to promise to go to her Aunt Hermione for a bit, if Hermione will take her. I tried to make her agree to six months, but I am not sure that I can bring her to consent to so long a banishment."

"But—to go out with Jingles, after all that has been said to her !"

"And for him to have the audacity to take her out—and to such a meeting."

"They must have gone out immediately after dinner. You have not dined ?"

Lord Lamerton shook his head.

“I have swallowed a good deal to-day,” he said with an attempt at a smile. “I have been bamboozled by Welsh, dumfounded by Saltren, and flouted by Arminell.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A CONTRETEMPS.

THE inquest on young Tubb took place on the following day. This occasioned fresh unpleasantness, and further excitement of feeling. Unfortunately Captain Saltren was on the jury, and he insisted against all evidence and reason, in maintaining that the verdict should be to the effect that Archelaus Tubb had been murdered by his lordship. One other jurymen agreed with him, but the others could not go so far. As Saltren stubbornly refused to yield, the jury was discharged, and another summoned by the coroner, which returned "Accidental death," but with a rider blaming Macduff for carelessness in the destruction of the cottage.

Arminell was changed in her behaviour to her father since she had heard Mrs. Saltren's story. She had lost faith in him; those good qualities which she had previously recognised in him, she now believed to be unreal. The man as he was had been disclosed to her—false, sensual, wanting in honour. All the good he displayed was the domino cast over and concealing the mean and shabby reality. He wore his domino naturally, with a frank *bonhomme* which was the perfection of acting—but then, it was acting. Arminell was very straightforward, blunt and sincere, and hated everything which was not open. Social life she represented to herself as a school of disguises, a masquerade in which no one

shows as he is, but dresses in the part he wishes to appear in. Some men and women are such finished actors that they forget themselves in their assumed parts, and such was her father. Having to occupy the position of a county magnate, he had come to fit the position exteriorly, and had accommodated his conscience to the delusion that he was what he pretended to be—the wealthy, blameless, honourable nobleman, against whom not a stone could be cast. All this was a pretence, and Arminell was not angry, only her moral nature revolted at the assumption. Her high principle and downrightness made her resent the fraud that had been perpetrated on herself and the world.

She had on several occasions heard her father speak in public, and had felt ashamed because he spoke so badly, but chiefly because she was convinced that he was repeating, parrot-like, what had been put into his mouth by my lady. He pretended to speak his own thoughts, and he spoke those of his wife—that was an assumption, and so was his respectability, so his morality.

Arminell had long undervalued her father's mental powers, but she had believed in his rectitude. She thought his virtue was like that stupid going-straightforward that is found in a farmer's horse, which will jog along the road, and go straight, and be asleep as it goes. But Mrs. Saltren's story, which she believed in spite of the improbabilities—improbabilities she did not stop to consider, had overthrown the conviction, and she now saw in her father a man as morally imperfect as he was intellectually deficient.

Had he been open, and not attempted to disguise his offence, she might have forgiven him, but when he assumed the disguise of an upright God-fearing man, doing his duty, her strictly truthful nature rose up in indignant protest.

* * * * *

“My dear!” exclaimed Lady Lamerton; “good gracious, what is this I hear? What have you done? Undertaken

to throw open the grounds and house on Saturday ! Why, Lamerton, how could you ? Saturday is the day on which I proposed to give our garden-party."

"'Pon my word, Julia, I forgot about your garden-party !"

"You promised to make a note of the day."

"So I did—not to be from home. But I forgot when I was asked to allow the place to be seen."

"You must countermand the order to have it opened."

"That I cannot do. I publicly, at the meeting, announced that I would allow the house and grounds to be overrun on Saturday, and I cannot withdraw the permission."

"Only for this once."

"Not for this once. It is the first Saturday after the promise was made. You must postpone your garden-party."

"I cannot do that. The invitations have been sent out. There is no time ; ices, the band, everything, are ordered."

"Well, Julia, we must make shift as we can."

"Look here, Lamerton, how will it do to confine our party to the terrace and garden, and have refreshments in the orangery ?"

"So be it ; that will do very well. The guests will not object. Tell them there has been a clash, and they will enjoy the joke."

"The public will want to be admitted to the house by the principal entrance."

"Of course. They are to be shown the state apartments, and the doubtful Van Dyck."

"Then—how about our guests ? What a predicament you have got me into. We cannot receive our guests at the back door."

"No need for that, Julia. Receive in the garden. The carriages will set down the guests at the iron gates. Pray heaven we may have fine weather !"

"It will be very awkward. The footmen will have to look after the sight-seers, that they do not poke their umbrellas through the pictures, or finger the ornaments—and we shall want them in the garden to attend to our guests!"

"It will go all right. I will send Macduff to arrange. He is a manager."

After a pause, Lady Lamerton said, "I am glad Hermione will take Arminell under her wing. You have told Armie to be ready to start on Monday?"

"Yes; I don't understand the girl, whether she is in a sulk, or sorry for her misconduct."

"Her boxes are being got ready," said Lady Lamerton. "There is something in her manner that is uncomfortable. I have noticed it as well as you. When I speak about Lady Hermione, she says nothing, and leaves the room."

"A plunge in London life will renovate her."

"I trust so. She sadly needs renovation. The caldron of a London season differs from that of Pelias. The latter rejuvenated those dipped in it; but the former matures."

"Have you spoken to Arminell about going out with Jingles the other night?"

Lady Lamerton shook her head.

"No," said his lordship, "I know it is of no use. Best say nothing. We must build our hopes on a diversion of her thoughts."

"Yes—" Lady Lamerton mused, then heaved a sigh. "Oh, Lamerton, what a muddle you have made! How shall we manage a garden-party when we have the public swarming all about the place? It is a *contretemps*!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW IT WAS CONTRIVED.

MACDUFF did it. Macduff exerted himself over it, for Macduff was under a cloud, and endeavoured to disperse the cloud by the sunshine of amiability. Besides Macduff was a manager—would have made a superb station-master at Rugby, or President of the French Republic—any other office full of difficulty and conflicting elements would suit Macduff. He rose to the occasion.

The day for the garden-party was delightful, and the park looked its loveliest, except in early spring and late autumn, when the buds of some and the fresh green of other trees were in all shades, or when the first frosts had touched the foliage with every hue of gold and copper. These, indeed, were the times when the park and woods were in most radiant beauty ; but, now, with a soft and luscious haze over the distance, and a brilliant sun streaming light above all, it was very beautiful.

The park and the house were abandoned to the sight-seers ; but the garden, terrace, and avenue were reserved for the guests. The orange house, now empty, because the trees had been brought forth to adorn the terrace, was decorated and arranged for refreshments, or for a refuge in the event of rain.

A military band was in attendance, and four lawn-tennis courts marked out, with boys in picturesque uniforms

stationed about them, to return the balls that passed beyond bounds.

At the lodge gate instructions had been given that the coachmen should deposit the guests at the garden gates—handsome, scroll iron gates under an arch of Anglo-Italian architecture, on the pediment of which were emblazoned the arms, supporters, and coronet of the Lamertons. This gate afforded admission to the garden-terrace, and completely shut off the more private part of the grounds from the park. But though the terrace was shut off from all intrusion, it was not so completely closed as to prevent those without from seeing into it. Between the gate and the house was a low wall, with a railing on it. The windows of the state drawing-room looked out on the terrace, and a glass door with a flight of stone steps descended from the entrance hall to the terrace. The house was of the age of Elizabeth; but one wing, that containing the state apartments, had been rebuilt or re-modelled in the reign of Queen Anne, so that it in no way harmonised with the rest of the house, though furnishing within a suite of noble and lofty apartments, cheerful, and a pleasing contrast to the somewhat sombre rooms, panelled with oak, or hung with tapestry in the older house. Orleigh was not one of those brick palaces that are found in the Midland and Eastern counties; but it was commodious, venerable, and charmingly situated.

The arrangements made by Macduff and sanctioned by my lady, worked harmoniously. To some of her guests the hostess mentioned the inconvenience to which she feared they would be subjected, and left them to tell the others about it, if they saw fit.

The day was so bright that there was no occasion to go indoors. Lord and Lady Lamerton stood at a short distance from the iron gates, ready to receive their guests, who, after a first greeting, walked forward and allowed their hosts

to receive the next batch. They looked at the beds, the oranges, the view ; and those who were enthusiastic about flowers found their way into the conservatories. Then the guests began to coagulate into knots and sets. The clergy herded together, and the sporting men graduated towards each other ; only the army men sought out and made themselves agreeable to the ladies.

"Where is Arminell ?" asked Lady Lamerton, in an interval between the reception of guests.

"'Pon my soul, Julia, I do not know."

"She ought to be here—with us. She puts the obligations of common courtesy from her as undeserving of attention."

"I will send for her."

"No ; best take no notice. She may appear presently. Here come the Cribbages."

"My dear Lady Lamerton," exclaimed the rector's wife, running up, and in a gushing manner extending her hand. "How bright and charming you look, in spite of all your worries. It is a marvel to me how you bear up under it all ; and to think of the audacity of Jingles ! the ingratitude, the presumption ! So he is turned out of the house, neck and crop ; and yet you look as fresh and smiling as if nothing had happened. How I do envy your placidity of temper."

Then, turning to Lord Lamerton, "Really, my lord, you are an angel of good-nature to allow the public admission to your beautiful grounds twice a week, and put yourself and your guests to annoyance to oblige them. I heard the particulars from Mrs. Macduff. Come, Robert"—this to her husband—"you must not detain our kind hosts. Don't you see that the Calwoodleighs are coming ? By the way, dear Lady Lamerton, where is Miss Inglett ? Shall I find her on the terrace ? What dress is she wearing ? There are so many persons here that I may miss her among the throng. Which dress is it ? The heliotrope or the amber ?"

She was drawn on by her husband, who saw that the Calwoodleighs were waiting to be received. "Come along, Selina," said the rector. "I see the archdeacon yonder."

"I'm not going to be hurried, Robert," answered Mrs. Cribbage. "I must have another word presently with my lord. You may leave me if you like. You are not wont to be civil to your wife. Besides, I know why you want to be off. It is very fine pretending you have something to say to the archdeacon; I know what is the attraction in that direction, his niece, Miss Lovat, whom some think pretty. But I don't. Go and prance about the archdeacon and her, if you like."

The Calwoodleighs having gone forward, Mrs. Cribbage returned to her hosts, and said to Lord Lamerton:

"How good and kind it was of you, my lord, to put in an appearance at poor Archelaus Tubb's funeral. I have no doubt the family were flattered by the extraordinary attention, and to be sure, what nasty, spiteful things have been said about your share in his death. Now, Robert, I will go with you and engage Miss Lovat whilst you talk to the archdeacon."

The arrival of the guests had in the meantime caused great satisfaction to the sight-seers, who had discussed and severely criticised the equipages.

The meeting at Patience Kite's cottage had been reported in the papers, the speech by Welsh given as he chose that it should be read, that of Saltren omitted altogether. Moreover, the county papers had announced the throwing open of the grounds on Saturday, and as this was a day of early closing, a good many townsfolk, mostly shopmen and shopgirls, took advantage of the occasion to come to Orleigh, and see the place where that notorious Lord Lamerton lived.

They clustered about the garden gates, passing their comments on the arrivals, mostly disparaging, and expressed at times loud enough to be heard by those discussed.

One or two parties arrived in hired conveyances. "Them's too poor to keep a carriage," was the observation with which they were saluted. The rector and Mrs. Cribbage came on foot. "These can't afford a cab. Curate and his old house-keeper, won't they eat!"

By far the most stylish and astonishing was the equipage of Sir Bosanquet Gammon, the new high sheriff. Sir Bosanquet was a north-country man who had made a large fortune as a civil engineer. He was never able altogether to shake off his native dialect and to speak as an educated English gentleman. This was the more singular, as he asserted that the family was originally De Gammon, and had Plantagenet blood in it. His coat-of-arms on carriage and yacht was a patchwork of quarterings. That Plantagenet blood and fifty heiresses should not by their fused gentility have prevented Gammon from talking with a north-country twang was something to shake the foundations of Anthropology.

Sir Bosanquet Gammon, being high sheriff, thought it incumbent on him to make a display, so he drove to Orleigh in a carriage with hammercloth, and powdered coachman and flunkeys.

Giraldus Cambrensis, in his "Topography of Ireland," says that in Meath, near Foure, are three lakes, each occupied by a special kind of fish, and he adds that, although these lakes are connected, the fish of each lake keep to themselves, and should they venture into the lake inhabited by the finny tribe of another species, they would be so like fish out of water, that they would die, unless indeed they precipitately retreated to their former habitation.

It also seemed at Orleigh this day that fish of three sorts were swimming about in three several ponds without association and amalgamation. Within the iron gates and rails were the red-fleshed salmon, by themselves, with interests in common, a common mode of speech, a common

code of manner, and a common culture. Without the railings, yet within the park, were the common-place fish that understood and appreciated jokes which would have been insipid or vulgar to those within the railings, also with a common dialect, a peculiar twang and intonation of voice, and a common style of thought and cultural tone.

Further away, outside the park gates and enclosure were fish of another quality altogether, the homely trout—the village rustics, the miners out of work—also with their peculiar modes of thought, their dialect, their prejudices, and their quality of humour, distinct from the rest and special to themselves.

How would one of the town fish have felt, had he been admitted within the gates? How one of the rustics, if associated with the shop-folk? Each would have been uneasy, gasping, and glad to get back from such uncongenial society into his proper pond once more.

When the last of the guests had arrived, Lord and Lady Lamerton left their reception post, and mixed with the company. The lookers-on outside the railings did not at once disperse. A policeman and a couple of keepers were on guard. The gates were closed, but the people insisted on peering through the bars and between the rails at the well-dressed gentle class within, and others scrambled up on the dwarf wall to obtain a better view, and were ordered down by the policeman only to reascend to the vantage point when his back was turned.

“I ain’t doing nothing,” remonstrated one of those required to descend; “a cat may look at a king, and I want to see Lord Lamerton.”

“Come down at once.”

“But I came here o’ purpose.”

“You can see the park and the pictures.”

“Oh, blow the park and pictures. I didn’t pay two-and-eight return to see them. I came here to see his lord-

ship. So, Mr. Bobby, take him my card and compliments. I'm in the Bespoke Department at Messrs. Skewes."

"You cannot see him. Come down at once."

"But I must and will see the nobleman who has been so wicked, and has caused such wretchedness, who has tore down widows' houses, and crushed the 'eads of orphans."

Then another man offered a cigar to one of the keepers.

"Look here, old man," he said. "Point his lordship out to me. I want to have a squint at him—a regular Judge Jeffries he is."

"Talk of Bulgarian atrocities," said another. "They're a song to these at Orleigh. Down with the House of Lords, says I, and let us have the enfranchisement of the soil."

"It is all primogeniture does it," said a third, "there never ought to be no first borns."

In the innermost pond, meanwhile, the guests were swimming about and consorting. Mrs. Cribbage bore down on Lady Lamerton.

"Do tell me, dear Lady Lamerton, where is Miss Arminell; I have been searching for her everywhere. Don't tell me she is ill. Though, perhaps, she has had occasion to feel upset. She really must be somewhere, but I am so short-sighted I have not been able to find her. Perhaps she is in a new dress, with which I am not acquainted."

"We are going to send her to town; her aunt, Lady Hermione Woodhead, has been so kind as to invite her, as we remain at Orleigh for the time, and do not think of being in town during the season. It would be a pity for Arminell not to see the Academy this year, and hear the Italian opera, and see some of our friends. So when Lady Hermione offered it, we accepted gladly."

"Very gladly, I am sure," said Mrs. Cribbage with a knowing twinkle in her eye. "But where is she now?"

"I cannot say, I have not looked for her; I have been

intent on receiving our friends. Here is Lady Gammon. I must be civil to her."

"How propitious the weather is," said the high sheriffess, "and how gratified you must be, my lady, to see so many individuals about you in the plentitude of enjoyment."

There are persons, they belong to a certain social class, who always use a long word from the Latin when a short Anglo-Saxon one would do.

"What a superabundance of ministers, all, I perceive, of the Established Church; but really, considering the high sheriff was to be here, they might have come in hats, instead of what is vulgarly called wide-awakes. Do you know, my lady, what it is that I really want of you? Can you guess what the favour is that I am going to ask of you? No—I am sure you cannot. Sir Bosanquet and I had a discussion together at breakfast relative to the polarisation of light, and I said to Sir Bosanquet—" (within parenthesis be it noted that before the civil engineer was knighted, his wife always called him hub or hubby)—"I said to Sir Bosanquet, 'my dear, we will refer the matter to her ladyship who is a very learned lady, and she shall decide.'"

"I!" answered Lady Lamerton, "I really do not know. It has—that is—I believe it has—but really I have only the vaguest idea concerning it; it has to do with the breaking up of a ray into its prismatic colours."

"I knew it has to do with prismatic colours, and had nothing to do with polar bears. Polar bears are white."

"Thomson," said Lady Lamerton aside to a footman, "be so good as to send me Miss Inglett's maid—to me here, on the terrace."

A few minutes later the lady's-maid came to where my lady was standing; she held a salver with a three-cornered sealed note on it.

"Please, my lady, Thomson said your ladyship—"

"Yes," interrupted Lady Lamerton, "what have you got there?"

"A note, my lady, Miss Inglett left on her dressing-table for his lordship, before she went."

"Went!"

"Started, my lady, for town to Lady Hermione Woodhead's. She said, my lady, she would write for me when I was required."

Lady Lamerton took the note. It was addressed to her husband, but she hastily opened it. It contained these few lines only—

"DEAR PAPA,

"You said it would be best for you and for my step-mother, and for myself, if I went away for some time from Orleigh. I have gone—but not to Aunt Hermione. You can, of course, guess who accompanies me, one whom I trust ere long you will acknowledge as a son. I will write in a day or two.

"Yours ever,

"Arminell."

Lady Lamerton did not lose her presence of mind. "That will do," she said to the maid, and went in quest of her husband. She showed him the letter and said in a low tone, "No time is to be lost; go instantly, go yourself to Chillacot, and see if she be there. If not you can learn where *he* is. No one else can go. I will keep the company amused and occupied. Slip out by the gate at the end of the avenue and go over the down, no one will observe you."

Lord Lamerton nodded, and departed without a word. Presently up came Mrs. Cribbage again, "I cannot find Miss Inglett anywhere," she said.

"No, Mrs. Cribbage," answered Lady Lamerton. "How are you likely to when she is gone to town? Did not I tell you that we had accepted Lady Hermione's kind invitation?"

"But I did not understand she was gone. I thought she was going."

"Surely you misunderstood me, Mrs. Cribbage; here comes Sir Bosanquet."

"There now," exclaimed Lady Gammon, sailing up with a flutter of silk, and a waving of lace fringe to her parasol. "There, I said so, Sir Bosanquet, polarisation of light has nothing to do with polar bears. I bought Plantagenet a box of the prismatical colours because they are warranted to contain no deleterious matter in them, should the dear child take to"—there was no Latinised word that would suit, or that she knew—"to suck 'em."

"Oh Lady Gammon," said the hostess, "I am so vexed that I cannot introduce to you my step-daughter, but she has been invited to her aunt's, Lady Hermione Woodhead, and there is a Richter concert to-night—selections from Parzifal, which she ought not to miss."

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW THE FISH CAME TOGETHER.

LADY LAMERTON did her utmost. She was lively, quite sprightly even. She moved among her guests with a pleasant smile and a courteous word for every one. The lawn-tennis courts were occupied by four sets of players. A cluster of young men and girls were at a table blowing soap bubbles, and finding fund for laughter in the process. A group of their seniors were making a party for bowls. Some of the guests stood on the terrace looking down at the lawn-tennis players and pretending to take interest in the games. The majority of those present wandered about the gardens, shrubberies, and conservatories.

A little hand was thrust into that of Lady Lamerton, and on looking down she saw Giles.

"Mamma, where is papa? I want to go with him."

"He has had to leave, dear, for a few minutes; he will return in perhaps half an hour."

"But I can run after him. Where is he?"

"You cannot follow him, Giles, he is walking fast, and is about something that your presence would disturb. Are there no little boys here for you to play with? Yes, there are the two Fountaynes. I invited them expressly."

"I do not want to play. I had rather walk with papa."

"But he would wish you to take the little boys and show them your pony. We cannot, my dear, always do what we like. We must bestir ourselves to make our guests happy."

“Very well, mamma, I will go with the Fountaynes as papa wishes it.”

He let go her hand, and went off. She looked affectionately after the child for a moment, and then resumed her duties as hostess, with an anxious heart but an untroubled brow.

From the first moment that our intelligence dawns, the first lessons impressed on us, lessons never pretermitted, from which no holiday gives release, relentlessly and systematically enforced, are those of self-suppression. We are not allowed as children even to express our opinions decidedly, to hate heartily any person or anything. We are required, for instance, to say nothing more forcible than—we are not devoted to our governess, and not partial to bread-and-butter pudding. We are instructed either to keep silence altogether relative to our feelings, which is best of all, a counsel of perfection; or if we cannot do that, to give utterance to them in an inoffensive and unobjectionable manner. We are taught to speak of a stupid person as amiable, and of a disagreeable person as well-intentioned. Our faces are not suffered to express what our tongues are not permitted to speak, consequently the facial muscles are brought into as complete control as the tongue.

Consequently also when we are thoroughly schooled, we wear masks perpetually and always go about with gloved tongues. At first, in the nursery and in the schoolroom, there are kicks and sulks, when the mask and the glove are fitted on, and yet, in time, we become so habituated to them that we are incapable of conceiving of life as endurable without the wearing of them.

I know that I have become so accustomed to a ring on my little finger, that if perchance I have forgotten it, and gone into society, I have blushed to the roots of my hair, and stammered and been distracted, thinking myself insufficiently clothed, simply because I had left my ring on

the washhand-stand. And it is the same with our masks and gloves, we grow to like them, to be uncomfortable without them, to be afraid to show our faces or move our tongues when unprotected by mask and glove.

A circus horse becomes so used to the bearing rein that even when he is allowed to gallop without one, he runs with arched neck.

We are all harnessed from our cradle, with bearing reins, not only to give our necks the proper curve, but also to prevent us from taking the bit in our mouths, kicking out, plunging over the barriers, and deserting the ring, and the saw-dust, the lights, and the crack of the manager's whip.

Round and round our ring we go, now at an amble, then at a canter, and at last at a gallop, but always under restraint; the only liberty allowed and taken is now and again to make our hoofs sound against the barriers, and to send a little sawdust in the faces of the lookers-on, who clap hands and laugh or scream. We dance in our arena to music, and spin about, and balance ourselves on precarious bases, take a five-barred gate at a leap, and go over a score of white poles, dexterously lowered to allow of a leap without accident. Then we fall lame, and lie down, and allow a pistol to be exploded in our ears, and permit ourselves to be carried out as dead. But whatever jump we make has been pre-arranged and laboriously practised, and whatever performance we be put through has been artificially acquired. We never snap our bearing rein, never utter a defiant snort, toss our heads, kick out at those who would detain us, and dash away to pastures green and free moorside.

Possibly our happiness would be greater were we to burst away from the perpetual mill-round, but I know very well what the result would be. We would rapidly degenerate on the moorside into uncouth, shaggy creatures,

destitute of gloss and grace, and forget all our circus manners.

That which the grooming and breaking-in are to a horse, that culture is to a man, a sacrifice of freedom. The lower classes of men, the great undisciplined, or imperfectly disciplined bulk of mankind look on at the easy motions and trained grace of the higher classes, with much the same puzzlement as would a cluster of wild ponies stand and watch the passing of a cavalcade of elaborately-trained horses. Both would be equally ignorant of the amount of self-abnegation and submission to rule which go to give ease and gloss.

According to a Mussulman legend, the Queen of Sheba had some smack of savagery about her ; she had goat's hair on her ankles. King Solomon heard this by report, and being desirous of ascertaining the truth, he had water poured over the pavement of his court when she came to visit him. As she approached she raised her skirt, and Solomon detected the goat's hair.

There are a good many men as well as women who appear in the best courts nowadays with hair about their hocks ; they have been insufficiently groomed. But in this they differ from the Queen of Sheba, that they persistently show us their hocks, and even thrust them in our faces. Merciful powers ! how many half-broken, ill-trimmed cobs I have met with, kicking up their undocked heels, showing us that they can jump over poles and overleap hurdles, that they can balance themselves on chairs, and dance and rear on their hind legs, and paw the air, and whinny for applause. We politely pat our palms, and look all the while, not at their antics, but at their hocks, not at all impressed with their silver and spangled trappings, but very conscious of the hair about their hoofs.

It is the fashion for moralists to hold up their hands, and shake their heads, and declaim against the artificialities, the

disguises of social life, and to say that every word spoken and look given should be sincere ; that men and women should scorn concealment and hate subterfuge. But—would the world be tolerable were it so constituted? I mean the world of men. Is it so in the world of nature? Is that above screens and disguises? Is that ruthlessly true, and offensively genuine in its operations? Where is there not manifest a desire to draw the veil over what is harsh and unbecoming? The very earth covers her bald places with verdure, obscures her wounds, and drapes her ragged edges. So the function of culture is the softening of what is rough, the screening of what is unseemly, the disguising of all that may occasion pain. It is nothing else but charity in its most graceful form, that spares another at the cost of self.

I have been in a volcanic region where there were innumerable craters, great and small. Those on the plain, hardly rising above a few feet out of it, showed all their bare horror, their torn lips, their black throats, their sides bristling with the angular lava that had boiled out of their hot and angry hearts, long ago, but ever showing. They were perfectly genuine, expressing their true nature in ugly nakedness. But there were other volcanoes rising to mountain heights, and these had mantled themselves in snow, had choked and smoothed over their clefts, and hung garlands of silver, and dropped gauzy veils over their vitreous precipices ; the very craters, the sources of the fire, were filled to the brim and heaped up to overflow with unsullied snow, rising white, rounded, innocent, as a maiden's bosom. Which was best? I know which was the pleasantest to see.

So is it with humanity. We are all volcanoes with fire in our hearts. Some have broken forth and torn themselves to pieces, some are in a chronic state of fume, and dribble lava and splutter cinders perpetually, and others are ex-

hausted. Surely it is best to hide our fires, and drape our savagery, and bury our snags and dust the white snow over all that is rugged and gloomy and ungente.

Or—to revert to our former illustration, if we have hair on our heels, which is best, to expose it, or, like the Queen of Sheba, let down our skirts over it?

When our temper is ruffled, we do not fret with it those we meet—when our heart is bitter, we do not spit our gall in the faces of our friends—when our blood boils in our veins we are careful to let none of it squirt on and blister the hand that is extended to us. A man may smile, and smile, and be a villain—that is true, but a man or a woman may smile, and smile, and be exceedingly sorrowful, may dance and laugh with an aching heart. Who does not remember Andersen's story of the little mermaid, who obtained from the witch power to shed her squamous tail at the cost of feeling knives pierce her soles every footstep she took? And the little mermaid danced at the prince's wedding—at the wedding of the prince whom she had once held to her heart, and for the love of whom she had shed her fish's tail, and danced with a rosy face, though every step was a mortal agony. Do we not love and venerate the little mermaid, because, instead of howling or whining, and holding up her bleeding soles to extract commiseration from all, she dropped her skirts over them, and danced and warbled, and flushed as the rose, so that none supposed she leaped with pain, and sang to still her heart, and flushed with stress of anguish? So is it with all who have gone through the great discipline of culture; they no more expose their wounds and cry out for sympathy than they expose deformities.

I remember the bridge over the Gave at Pau, on each side of which through its entire length sat beggars exhibiting sores and soliciting alms. But these were men and women in rags, and those who wear only the rags of culture do the

same, they draw aside their tatters and expose their wounds to our shocked eyes.

But it is not so with such as have gone through the school and learnt its lessons. They are not for ever obtruding themselves, their worries, their distresses on every one they meet, their own proper self with its torn veins, and festering grief, and distilling blood is folded over with silk, and a jewelled brooch clasps the lace over the swelling, suffering bosom, and all who see it admire the jewels and are kept in ignorance of what is beneath. In the primitive Church the *disciplina arcani* was enforced, the doctrine of holy reserve taught; for there were certain mysteries of which the faithful were required to keep the secret; and culture, modern culture, has also its *disciplina arcani*, its doctrine of reserve, a reserve to be observed on all selfish pains and sorrows, a mantling over with a cloak of mystery everything which can jar with the pleasure and the cheerfulness and the brightness of the day to others.

So, with a heart quivering with apprehension and racked with grief for Arminell, Lady Lamerton moved about the terrace with a placid face, and with her thoughts apparently engrossed wholly in making her guests at home and happy. She insisted on Sir Bosanquet Gammon and the rector playing at aunt Sally, whilst Lady Gammon looked on with a face green with horror. She brought a garden chair herself to old and tottery Mrs. Calwoodleigh, who was standing looking on at her daughter playing lawn-tennis. She found a timid little cluster of husband and wife and daughters, fresh arrivals in the neighbourhood, and knowing no one, and introduced them to a dozen nice families. She broke up a flirtation with a young officer, which she thought undesirable, by sweeping away with her the young lady into the orchid house to admire a clump of *Dissa grandiflora*. She interrupted a political discussion in the nick of time, before the parties became angry and personal. She singled out a little

old maid outrageously dressed who was prowling about the flowers, and delighted her by presents of cuttings and little pots of bulbs, more than she could carry, but which the gardener was bidden convey to Miss Bligh's carriage. She galvanised into life a drooping cluster of young and smooth parsons, and set them playing La Crosse with as many charming girls. She pointed out the tables where were claret and champagne cups, strawberries and cream, to certain thirsty and heavy souls which had been gravitating sideways in that direction for some time. She caught an antiquary, and carried him off to the end of the garden to show him a Romano-British stone with ogams nicked at the angle, which had been discovered used as a footbridge, and set up by Lord Lamerton to save it from destruction.

"Here, Mr. Fothergill, I must leave you to copy the inscription. Lady Gammon is anxious to have the polarisation of light explained, and I must take her to the library for an encyclopædia—fortunately the study to-day is not invaded by the public."

Behind her back many a remark was made on her excellence as a hostess, her cheerfulness, her amiability. Every one liked Lady Lamerton; they could not fail to do so, she took such pains to make herself agreeable. Only Arminell despised her, and despised her for those very qualities which won to her the hearts of her acquaintances. Arminell thought her lacking in depth and sincerity. It was true that she was without intensity of conviction, but that was characteristic of breadth; it was true that she was unreal, and that was part of her culture; so to some folks everything is unreal but Zolaism, the Morgue, discourtesy, breach of good manners, the refuse heap. Man is unreal clothed in skin, the only genuine man is he who has been excoriated, with every nerve and muscle and vein exposed; the canvas only is real, not the Madonna di San Sisto looking with her ineffably earnest eyes out of it; lamp-black and treacle and

old rags are the reality, not the Book of Psalm and Song, printed out of the former on the transubstantiated latter; catgut and deal and brass only are real, not the symphony of Beethoven, not the march from the Kernenate in "Lohengrin," played on the instruments manufactured out of these vulgar materials. The pelting rain is real, not the gilded evening cloud that contains the stored moisture; in a word, that only is real, and commendable, and to be observed, which is gross, material, offensive. I know that the sweetness and fragrance of that old culture which was but another name, as I have already said, for charity, is passing away, like the rising incense, perhaps again to be caught and scented only in the courts of heaven. I know that it is in fashion now to be rude and brusque, and to deny oneself no freedom, and exercise on oneself no restraint, so as to be quite natural. But what is that save to revert to social Adamanism and Bosjesmanism—to savagery in its basest and nastiest form—to renounce the form as well as the power of culture.

Phædrus tells in one of his fables of an old woman who found an empty amphora of old Falernian wine; she put her nose to the mouth and snuffed and said, "If you smell so sweet when void, how sweet you must be when full."

Well! let us say that half the politeness and grace and charm of society is unreal. It is the aroma of the old Falernian. How much better, no doubt, if the vessel be full of that most precious old Falernian, that perfect courtesy of heart which suffereth long and is kind; vaunteth not itself, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, believeth all things, loveth all things, endureth all things. But, I ask, is not an empty amphora of Falernian more grateful than one full of asafœtida?

The evening light slanted over the park, making the grass yellow as corn, and casting purple shadows behind the elms. The front of the house toward the terrace was

glorified, the plate-glass windows gleamed as if rolled out of sunlight. The terrace was alive with people in their gayest dresses, in light summer colours, pink and turquoise, strawberry, spring green, crimson and cream. The band was playing, and the scarlet uniforms of the military formed a brilliant patch of colour at the end of the terrace against a bank of yews.

Below the terrace was the tennis-court, reached by a flight of several steps, and against the wall that upheld the terrace roses were trained, and were in masses of flower, scenting the air.

The lawn-tennis ground formed a second terrace banked up from the park which sloped away rapidly thence to the winding river Ore.

In the midst of the flower-beds and moving coloured kaleidoscope of figures on the gravelled terrace was a fountain and a basin. In the latter floated water-lilies, and gold fish darted, and carried off the crumbs cast to them. The water that leaped out of a triton's shell was turned in the evening sun as it fell, into amethysts.

Away, across the valley, stood the little church with its tower peeping out of limes, now all alight with the western sun; and the cock on its top was turned to a bird of fire.

"Hark!" exclaimed the rector, "I hear our bell. Good heaven! Surely I've not forgotten—I did not know there was to be a funeral. I did not know any one was ill—in danger. It is tolling."

Then the band, which had rested for a moment and shaken the moisture out of their wind instruments, and cleared their throats with iced ale, came to attention as the conductor rattled his staff on the music-stand, and beat, one, two, three, four! Then with a blast and crash and rattle—

"Se-e-e the conquer-ing her-er-er-er-O comes,
Sou-ou-ound the trum-pets,
Be-e-eat the drums."

At that moment, again, a little hand was thrust into that of Lady Lamerton, and again she saw her boy, Giles, at her side. He was looking pale, and was crying.

"What is the matter, Giles? You are shivering. Have you taken a chill? Go indoors, dear."

"Mamma," said the boy, "I want papa. I have shown the Fountayne boys my pony and the horses, and my goat, and rabbits, whatever I thought papa would like them to see, and now I want papa. Where is papa?"

"My dear, you must go indoors. What is that? In pity—what is going on? Surely the public are not going to invade the terrace."

Yes—they were.

A large party had been shown the state apartments, had looked at the pictures, tried the sofas, made jokes over the family portraits, attempted to finger the china, and then had assembled at the drawing-room windows which commanded the terrace and the lawn-tennis courts.

"Seeing the 'ouse without the master, is like 'Amlet with the part of 'Amlet left out," observed one of the sight-seers. "I say, flunkey, point us out the noble lord, and I'll tip you a copper."

"Gentlemen and ladies," said the august butler, "I must request that you will not press to the windows. It is time to move on. There is another party waiting to go over the house."

"Ah! but suppose we don't choose to move on, Old Heavy? Ain't the place open to us? Was any time specified for us to be trotted out? Show us the statute," laughed a lawyer's clerk.

However, after some urging and remonstrance, the throng was got outside the state drawing-room, into the entrance hall.

"I say, you coves!" shouted the young man from the bespoke department of Messrs. Skewes, "Follow me, and

I will get you a sight of his lordship and all the blue-blooded aristocrats below."

He led the way, and was followed at a run to the glass door opening upon the steps that descended to the terrace: the rush was so sudden that the butler had not time or thought to interpose.

"Hark!" called the lawyer's clerk. "By George, if the band ain't doing us the compliment by anticipation of striking up 'See the conquering hero comes!' which means us—the British public. Lend a shove, Tommy, and we'll be down among them and have some ices and sherry cobbler too, and take a squint at the noble lord himself."

A united thrust against the double glass doors drove them apart, and down the steps, and out upon the terrace poured the Public.

At that same moment the iron gates were swung apart, and another party entered through them—not of the sight-seers, but villagers in their working clothes and shirt-sleeves.

"See-e-e the conquer-ing her-er-er-er-o comes,
Sou-ou-ound the trum-pets,
Be-e-eat the drums."

The conductor of the band looked round, and what he saw made him hold up his staff. The music instantly ceased.

Also, simultaneously, all talking among the guests ceased.

Also, instantaneously, the sight-seers who had been jostling one another, and laughing loudly, and egging one another on, and were pouring down the steps, halted and ceased to be heard.

Nothing, indeed, was heard but the toll of the distant bell, and the crunch of the gravel under the feet of the advancing party of villagers.

The fish of the three ponds had mixed for once, and were silent in the presence of the all-conquering hero to whom all submit—Death.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HOW IT CAME ABOUT.

"I WONDER now," said Mrs. Saltren to herself, "whatever has made the raspberry jam so mouldy? Was the fruit wet when it was picked? I cannot remember. If it was, it weren't my fault, but the weather on which no one can depend. I wanted to send up some to Tryphœna Welsh, but now I can't, unless I spoon off the mould on the top of one and fill up from the bottom of another. It is a pity and a waste of confidence and a sapping of faith when one goes, makes jams, and spends coals and sugar and a lot of perspiration, and gets nothing for it but mould an inch thick. I must send Tryphœna Welsh something, for if Giles, as he tells me, has gone to take up with writing for the papers, he'll need the help of James, and there's no way of getting at men's hearts but through their stomachs. It was tiresome Giles writing to my brother and not saying a word to me about it. I could have told him James was not in town, so no need for him to address a letter to him at Shepherd's Bush; he went, after seeing us, to stay with one literary friend and then another, so he won't have Giles' letter till he returns to town. That accounts for my boy receiving no answer. Giles never saw him when he was here, which was tiresome. It is vexing too about the hams. I'd have sent one up to James, if they had not been spoiled, along of the knuckles being outside the bags, so that the flies walked in as they might at a house door. I pickled those hams in

treacle and ale and juniper. I made paper bags for them, and what more could I do? It was no fault of mine if the hams got spoiled. It was the fault of the hams being too big for my paper bags, so that the bone stuck out. And then the weather—it was encouraging to the flies. After the raspberry jam and the hams, one wants comfort. I'll get a drop."

But before she had reached the corner cupboard, the door opened, and her husband came in, looking more strange, white, and wild than ever. He staggered to the table, rolling in his walk as if he were drunk, and held to the furniture to stay himself, fearing to take a step unsupported. His face was so livid, his eyes so full of something like terror, that a thrill of fear ran through Mrs. Saltren—she thought he was mad.

"What is it, Saltren? Why do you look at me in that fashion? I was not going to my cupboard for anything but my knitting. I said to myself, I will knit a warm jersey for Giles against the winter, and I put the pins and the wool in there. Now don't look so queer. Are you ill?"

"Marianne," he said slowly, then drew a long breath that sounded hoarsely in his throat as he inhaled it, "Marianne, you are avenged."

"What do you mean? Are you referring to the hams or the raspberry jam?"

"Marianne," he repeated, "the word has come to pass. The hand has been stretched forth and has smitten the evil doer. The mighty is cast out of his seat and laid even with the dust."

"I don't know what you're a-talking about, Stephen. I concern myself about common things, and about prophecy no more than I do about moonshine. The jams get mouldy and the hams ain't fit to eat."

"Did I not tell you, Marianne, of what I saw and heard that Sabbath day?"

"I gave no heed to it."

"It is fulfilled. The purposes of heaven fulfil themselves in a wonderful and unexpected way when we are least awaiting it. He is dead."

"Who is dead?"

"Lord Lamerton."

"Lord Lamerton!" Marianne Saltren started.

"How is it that? Where, Stephen, and when?"

"He is lying dead beneath the cliff."

"Good heavens! How came that about?"

"He was cast down by the hand of an avenging justice. You have been avenged."

"I—I have nothing to complain of—to have avenged on Lord Lamerton."

"Nothing of late, but you told me of the dishonour, of the wrong—"

Mrs. Saltren uttered a cry of horror.

"Stephen, for God's sake!—you do not mean?—you know, you know that I named no names."

"I knew, Marianne, to whom you referred. I knew it at once. Then I understood why you gave your son the Christian name he bears."

"Oh, Stephen, it was not that."

"Yes, Marianne, it was. It all hangs together. I saw how he, Lord Lamerton, was constrained to make much of the boy, to spend money on him, to educate and make a gentleman of him, and take him into his house."

"Stephen! Stephen! this is all a mistake."

"No, Marianne, it is no mistake. I see it all as plainly as I saw the angel flying in the midst of heaven bearing the Everlasting Gospel in his right hand, which he cast into the water before me."

"I was talking nonsense. I am—Oh, Stephen! What did you say?—he—Lord Lamerton is not dead?"

"He is dead. He is lying dead on the path."

Mrs. Saltren was seized with a fit of trembling, as if an ague were come over her. She stared at her husband, terror-stricken, and could not speak. A horrible thought, a sickening dread, had swept over her, and she shrank from asking a question which might receive an answer confirming her half-formulated fears.

"The judgment has tarried long, but the sentence has overtaken the sinner at last. Now, after all, he has been made to suffer for what he once did to you. He cast you down, and with like measure has it been meted to him. He is cast down."

"He did nothing to me."

"You are ready to forgive him now, and to forget the past, because you are a Christian. But eternal justice never forgets, it waits and watches, and when least expected, strikes down."

"Oh, Stephen! What are you thinking of? You listened to my idle talk. You fancy that Lord Lamerton was—was the father of Giles, but he was not. Indeed, indeed, he was not."

"He was not!" echoed the captain, standing stiffly with outstretched arms and clenched fists, a queer ungainly figure, jointless, as if made of wooden sticks. "You yourself told me that he was."

"I named no names. Indeed I never said he was—why, Stephen, how could he have been, when you know as well as I do, that he was out of England for three years at that time; he was *attaché* as they call it at the embassy in—I forget, some German Court, whilst I was at Orleigh with the dowager Lady Lamerton."

The captain stood still, thinking, as one frozen and fast to the spot.

"Besides," put in the woman, with a flicker of her old inordinate vanity and falsehood, in spite of her present fear,

"you think very bad of me if you suppose I'd have took up with any one less than a viscount."

A long silence ensued, in which the tick of the clock sounded loudly and harshly.

"Marianne," he said at last hoarsely.

"It is all your fault and stupidity," said his wife hastily. "You have no judgment, and a brain on fire with religious craze. If you would but behave like an ordinary, sensible man and think reasonably, you would never have fallen into this mistake. You had only to think a moment reasonably, and you'd know that it was not, and could not be a man, and he only the honourable, and like to be no better than a baron, many hundred miles away at a foreign court, and the postage then not twopence ha'penny as 'tis now."

"Marianne," said Saltren again hoarsely, and he took a step nearer to her, and grasped her wrist. "Marianne, answer me." Saltren spoke with a wild flicker in his eyes as though jack-o-lanterns were dancing over those deep mysterious pools, "as you will have to answer at the great day of account—is Giles *not* the son of Lord Lamerton?"

"Of course not, I never said so. Who but a fool would suppose he was, and a week's post and foreign languages between? He never left—Munich I think it was, but it may have been Munchausen, and I never left Orleigh all the three years. Besides—I never said it was. I named no names."

Now a shudder ran through Saltren, a convulsive quake, but it was over instantaneously. Then, with his iron hand he pressed the woman's wrist downwards.

"Kneel," he said, "kneel."

"You are hurting me, Stephen! let go!"

"Kneel," he repeated, "kneel."

He forced her from her feet to her knees, before him; she was too frightened to disobey; and her vain efforts to

parry reproof, and lay the blame on him, had been without success, he had not noticed even the mean evasions.

"Marianne," he said solemnly, in his deepest, most tremulous tones. "Tell me—who was the father of Giles?"

"That I will not—never—no, I cannot tell."

"You shall, I will hold you here, with my hand clenched, and not let you go—No, never, not all the coming night, not all next day, all the night following—for ever, and ever, until you confess."

She stooped towards the floor, to hide her face from his searching eyes, with the lambent flame in them that frightened her. Then she looked furtively towards the window, and next to the door, into the back kitchen, seeking means of escape.

"It is vain for you to try to get away," said the captain slowly. "Here I hold you, and tighten my grasp, till you scream out the truth. They used to do that in England. They slipped the hands in iron gloves and the feet in iron boots, and screwed till the blood ran out of fingers and foot-ends, and the criminal told the truth. So will I screw the truth out of you, out of your hands. You cannot escape. Was the father of Giles a nobleman?"

"He was not the highest of all—not a duke."

"What was he then?"

She was silent, and strove to twist her hands away. He held both now. He compressed his clutch. She cried out, "I cannot bear this."

"What was his title?"

"You are hurting me, Stephen."

"Was he a nobleman at all?"

With hesitation, and another writhe to get away—"N—no."

"Then, all that story you told of the deception practised upon you was a lie?"

"Not a lie—it was a joke. James was not such a fool as you, he took it as such. But you—"

Then Stephen Saltren drew his wife to her feet, and strode to the door, dragging her with him. She screamed. She supposed he was about to kill her ; but he turned, and said gloomily, "I will not hurt you, I want to show you what you have done—with your *joke*."

He forced open the door, and drew her through the garden, out at the wicket gate, along the path, up the coombe. There was two ways thence to Orleigh Park, one down the coombe to the main valley and high-road, and round a shoulder of hill ; the other way by a steep climb up a zig-zag path in the side of the hill to the top of the crag, thence over a stretch of some thirty acres of furzy down into the plantations and so into the park through them. The tortuous ascent began at the cottage, Chillacot, but Saltren drew his wife past the point whence it rose to where the evening sun cast the black shadow of the crag or "cleave" across the glen, and there—lying on broken, fallen stones, with his hands outstretched, his face to the clear sky, lay Lord Lamerton, dead.

Marianne Saltren cowered back, she was too frightened by what she saw to care to approach ; but her husband's vice-like grasp did not relax for all her weeping and entreaties. He compelled her to come close to the fallen man.

His finger ends buried themselves in her wrists, and checked her pulse, that her hands became numb, and tingled.

He remained silent, for long, looking at the dead man, his own face scarcely less white, his muscles hardly less rigid, his features as set, and more drawn. There was no sunlight in the narrow valley where they stood under the great slate cleave, but above at the edge of the opposite hill were gorse bushes so covered with golden bloom that they

seemed to be but one yellow flower, and on them the evening sun rested lovingly. Above, ghost-like in the blue sky, was a filmy disc—the moon, only perceivable from the deep valley, unseen by those who stood in the sunlight. The rooks were congregating in the wood at the bottom of the valley. That wood was a favourite resort to which the birds from several rookeries came every evening before set of sun, and chattered incessantly, and made as much noise as if they were members of the House of Commons discussing Irish matters. The sound issuing from that wood was strident like the rattle of a lawn-mower.

A blue-bottle fly was buzzing round the dead man. Saltren saw it, it made him uneasy ; he let go one of his wife's hands and with his disengaged hand drew his kerchief from his throat, a black silk one, and whisked it to and fro, to drive away the insect. "I cannot tell," he said, "heaven knows. If it had not been for what you said, for your amusing joke, he might now be living. I cannot tell. The ways of Providence are dark. We are but instruments used, and not knowing for what purposes used. I cannot tell."

He put the kerchief to his face and wiped it.

"I was yonder," he pointed upwards with his chin, and then whisked his kerchief in the direction of the top of the cliff. "I was on the down, and when I least expected it, and at the moment when I was not thinking of him, I saw him striding towards me, and when he came up with me, he was out of breath. I was standing then at the edge of the cleave. I was looking down into the coombe at my house, and I was in a dream. When I saw him, I did not stir. I would not go to meet him. I let him come to me. And when I saw him turn out of his path and cross the down to me, then I knew the hand out of the clouds pointed the way, and he followed not knowing to what it pointed. He came close to me, to the very edge of the rock, and I

did not budge one inch. He had been walking fast, and spoke pantingly, in a strangely mixed manner, and he asked some question about Giles. I do not remember what he asked, but at the sound of his voice and of that name, then the fire that was in my heart broke out, and I was blind and mad. My blood roared in my ears and head, as the sea roars and beats against the coast in a gale. Then I shouted out all I knew; I told him that Giles was his son, and that God would call him to account for his sins and his injustice and cruelties; and he was as one amazed, that neither spoke nor moved till I raised my hand to strike him on the breast to rouse him to answer, and then before ever I touched him, he stepped back and went over the cleave."

Then Marianne Saltren uttered a piercing shriek and tossed, and put her teeth to her husband's hand to bite at the fingers and force them to relax their grasp.

"There are people coming," she screamed, "I will tell them all that you killed him. Let me go. I cannot bear your touch."

"You accursed woman, you daughter of the old father of lies," said Saltren between his teeth, and the bubbles formed in his mouth as he spoke through his teeth, "I will not let you go till you have told me who was the father of Giles."

Suddenly, however, he let go her wrist, but she had her liberty for a moment only. He had drawn his black silk neckerchief round her throat, and twisted the ends about his fingers under her chin.

"Marianne, I killed him. Yet not I. I am but the executioner under Providence. What heaven judges that I carry out. And now I do not care if I kill you, after I killed him. I will kill you, I will strangle you, unless you confess who was the father of Giles."

He was capable of doing what he threatened.

"It were best for you," he said, "wicked woman, to

suffer here a little pain, than burn eternally. Confess, or I will send you into the world beyond." She was quiet for a moment, desisting from her useless struggle.

"You will release me if I say?"

"I will do so."

"He was a wonderfully handsome man then, a very fine fellow, the handsomest I ever saw."

"Who was he?"

"There were others besides me lost their hearts to him."

"Who was he?"

"I hear voices below the house. People are coming. You will be taken and hung because you killed him."

"Who was he?"

Saltren did not move a muscle. "Let them come, and they will find you dead also, beside him."

"You cannot judge of what he was by what he is now."

"His name?"

Again she looked to right and left, in spite of the grip under her chin, and made a start to escape, but instantly he tightened the kerchief and she became red as blood.

"Marianne," said Saltren. "His name?"

He relaxed the pressure. She listened, no—she heard no voices, only mingled cawing of rooks and thumping of pulses in her ears.

"If you must know?"

"I must."

"It was—Samuel Ceely."

CHAPTER XXXII.

A PLACE OF REFUGE.

HE thrust her away from him with an exclamation of disgust. Then he stooped. A tuft of meadow-sweet grew among the stones where the dead man lay, and its white flowers were full of pollen, and the pollen, shaken from them, had fallen, and formed a dust over the upturned face.

Captain Saltren drew his black silk kerchief over the dead man's brow, and wiped away the powder, and as he did so was aware that the blue-bottle had returned ; he heard its drone, he saw its glazed metallic back, as it flickered about the body. Then he turned and went away, but had not gone far before he halted and came back, for he thought of the insect. That fly teased his mind, it was as though it buzzed about his brain, then perched and ran over it, irritating the nerves with its hasty movement of the many feet, and the tap of its proboscis. He could not endure the thought of that fly—therefore he went back, and stood sweeping with his kerchief up and down over the face and then the hands, protecting the body against the blue-bottle.

He heard his wife running away, crying for help. He knew that before long she would have collected assistants to come to remove the dead body. They would find him there ; and was it safe for him to be seen in close proximity to the man he had killed ?

He knew that he ought to go. He had a horror of being there, alone with the corpse. Again he took a few steps to

leave it, but, looking back over his shoulder, he saw the blue-bottle settle on the forehead, then run down along the nose to the lips of the dead man, and he went back to drive the creature away once more. Presently he heard voices, not those now of cawing rooks, but of men. But he could not stir from the place. He would be committing a sin, an unpardonable sin, a sin from which his soul could not cleanse itself by floods of penitential tears, were he to allow the blue-bottle to deposit its eggs between those dead lips. His mind was unsettled. Now and then only did he think of himself as endangered, and feel an impulse to escape; and yet the impulse was not strong enough to overcome his anxiety to protect the body. He did not consider the future, whether he had occasion to fear for himself, whether he would be put on his defence.

After a flood we find backwaters where promiscuous matter drifts in circles—straw, snags of wood, a dead sheep, a broken chair; so was it in the mind of Stephen Saltren. His ideas were thrown into confusion; thoughts and fancies, most varied and incongruous, jostled each other, without connection. The discovery that his wife had lied to him in the matter of the parentage of Giles and the guilt of Lord Lamerton, following on the excitement in which he had been through the encounter with his enemy, had sufficed to paralyse his judgment, and make his thoughts swerve about incoherently.

He was aware that he had committed a great mistake, he knew that his position was precarious; but his confidence in his vision, and the mission with which he was entrusted remained unshaken, and this confidence justified to his conscience the crime that he had committed, if, indeed, he had committed one. But in the gyration of thoughts in his brain, only one fact stood out clearly—that a blue-bottle fly menaced the corpse, and that it was his duty to drive the insect away.

He was engaged on this obligation, when a hand touched him, and on looking round he saw Patience Kite.

"Captain Saltren," said the woman, "why are you here? I saw you both on top of the cleave, and I do know that he did not fall by chance. I will not tell of you."

He looked at her with blank eyes.

"Others may have seen you besides myself. You must not be found here."

"I am glad," said he, dreamily, talking to himself, not to her, "I am glad that I had, myself, no occasion against him. I thought I had, but I had not."

"Come with me," said Mrs. Kite, "folks are near at hand. I hear them."

He looked wistfully at the dead face.

"I cannot," he said.

"What! Do you want to be taken by the police?"

"I cannot—I am held by the blue-bottle." In a moment she stooped, snapped her hands together and caught the fly.

"Now," said Saltren, "I will follow. It was not I, I am but the miserable instrument. The hand did it that brought him my way, that led him to the edge, and that then laid hold of my arm."

Patience caught him by the shoulder and urged him away.

"You must not be seen near the body. Take my advice and be off to Captain Tubb about some lime, and so establish an alibi."

Saltren shook his head.

"If not, then come along with me. I will show you a hiding-place no one thinks of. Folks could not tell how to take it, when they didn't find me lying buried under the fallen chimney; but when I saw it was cracking, I made off through the dust, and none saw me escape. At the night-meeting some thought, when I stood on the table behind

you, that I was a spirit. You can feel my grip on your arm, that I am in the flesh and hearty. I set fire to the tumbled thatch. It does good to scare folks at times."

She drew Saltren into the wood. From a vantage point on the other side of the valley from that of the crag, themselves screened from sight, they could see a cluster of men about the dead body of Lord Lainerton, and Mrs. Saltren gesticulating behind them.

"I wonder," said Patience Kite, "whether that wife of yours be a fool or not? Your safety, I reckon, depends on her tongue. If she has sense, she will say she found the dead lord as she was going to fetch water. If she's a fool she'll let out about you. Did any one see you on the down?"

"I think Macduff went by some time before."

"Yes—I saw'n go along. That was some while afore."

Saltren said nothing. He was less concerned about his own safety than Mrs. Kite supposed. He was intently watching the men raise the dead body.

"It is a pity," pursued Mrs. Kite, "because if you hadn't been seen by Mr. Macduff, I might have sworn you a famous alibi, and made out you was helping me to move my furniture. Thomasine also, she'd ha' sworn anything in reason to do you a good turn. What a sad job it was that you didn't chuck over Macduff as well. But there—I won't blame you. We none of us, as the parson says, do all those things we ought to do, but leave undone what we ought. Thomasine and I'd swear against Mr. Macduff, but I doubt it would do no good, as Mrs. Macduff keeps a victoria and drives about in it, and we don't, so the judge would have respect to the witness of Macduff and disregard ours. And yet they say there is justice and righteousness in the world!—when our testimony would not be taken and Macduff's accepted, along of a victoria."

She caught Saltren's arm again, and led him further into

the wood, along a path that seemed to be no path at all for a man to walk, but rather a run for a rabbit. The bushes closed over a mere track in the moss.

"I reckon," muttered Patience, "there'll be a rare fuss made about the death of his lordship; but how little account was made of that of young Tubb. That was a cruel loss to Thomasine and me. My daughter and he were sweethearts. Captain Tubb was going to take the boy on as a hand at the lime quarry; he could not earn twenty shillings in a trade, so he would get fifteen as a labourer. Well—he could have married and kept house on that. Either he and my girl would have lived with me or with his father. Macduff and Lord Lamerton spoiled the chance for me and them. I owe them both a grudge, and I thank you for paying off my score on his lordship. Macduff may wait. In fall I will make a clay figure of him and stick pins in it, and give him rheumatic pains and spasms of the heart. Whatever parsons and doctors may say, I can do things which are not to be found in books, and there is more learning than is got by scholarship."

Mrs. Kite paused and looked round.

"You've not been about in the woods, creeping on all fours as I have, through the coppice. I know my way even in the dark. I can tell it by the feel of the stems of oak. Where there is moss, that is the side to the sou'-west wind and rain. The other side is smooth. So one can get along in the dark. What a moyle there will be over the death of his lordship all because he was a lord, and there was nothing made of the death of Arkie, because he was nobody. There is no justice and righteousness in the world, or Mr. Macduff would be wearing bracelets now and expecting a hempen necklace. Here we are at my cottage that he and his lordship tore down."

They emerged suddenly on the glade where stood the ruins. No one was visible. It remained as it had been

left, save that the fallen rafters and walls were blackened by the smoke of the up-flaming thatch.

Patience did not tarry at the hovel, but led the way to the quarry edge.

"Do you see here," she said, "you take hold of the ivy ropes, and creep along after me. It is not hard to do when you know the way. Miss Arminell first led me to the Owl's Nest. One Sunday she came here, and holding the ivy, got along to the cave, and then let go the rope. I went after her; and when my house was being pulled down about my head, then I remembered the cave, and went to it in the same way. Since then I have moved most of my things I want, and Thomasine has helped me. But she couldn't come till her foot was better, along the edge where we shall go. What I cannot carry we let down from above by a rope, and I draw them in to me with a crooked stick. I shall have to pay no ground rent for that habitation, and I defy Mr. Macduff to pull the roof down on me. It is a tidy, comfortable place, in the eye of the sun. What I shall do in winter I cannot tell, but it serves me well enough as a summer house. If I want to bake, I have my old oven in the back kitchen. Now lay hold of the ivy bands and come after me. I will show you where you can lie hid when there is danger at Chillacot."

Saltren followed her, and in a few minutes found himself in the cave. She had hung an old potato sack half-way down the hollow, and behind this she had made her bed and stored her treasures.

"No one can visit me whom I do not choose to receive," said Mrs. Kite. "If I should see a face come round the corner, the way we came, I'd have but to give a thrust, as that you gave his lordship, and down he would go. Now I will return. You remain here. See, I crook the ivy chains over this prong of rock when I am here. Whatever you do, mind and do not let the chains fall away. If you do, you're

a prisoner till I release you. That is how Miss Arminell was caught. I'll run and see what is going on, and bring you word."

The old woman unhooked sufficient strands of ivy to support herself, and went lightly and easily along the face of the rock.

Saltren remained standing. He had his hands linked behind his back, and his head projecting. He had not recovered balance of mind; his thoughts were like hares in poachers' gate-nets—entangled, leaping, turning over, and working themselves, in their efforts after freedom, into more inextricable entanglement. But one idea gradually formed itself distinctly in his mind—the idea that he had not been wronged by Lord Lamerton in the way in which he had supposed, and that, therefore, all personal feeling against him disappeared. But, in the confusion of his brain, he carried back this idea to a period before he discovered that he had been deceived by his wife into feeling this grudge, and he justified his action to himself; he satisfied himself that there could have been no private resentment in his conduct to his lordship when he lifted his hand against him, because twenty minutes later he discovered that there were no grounds for entertaining it. This consideration sufficed to dissipate the first sense of guilt that had stolen over him. Now he knelt down in the cave, at its entrance, and thanked heaven that no taint of personal animosity had entered into his motives and marred their purity. It was true that Lord Lamerton had thrown Saltren out of employ—he forgot that. It was true also that, as chairman of the board of directors of the railway, he had sought to force him to surrender his house and plot of land—he forgot that. It was true that at the time when he confronted Lord Lamerton, he believed that his domestic happiness had been destroyed by that nobleman—he forgot that also. He concluded that he had put forth his hand, acting under a divine impulse, and exe-

cutting, not personal vengeance, but the sentence of heaven.

When a camel, heavy laden, is crossing the desert, the notion sometimes occurs to it that it is over-burdened, that its back is breaking, and it sullenly lies down on the sand. No blows will stir it—not even fire applied to its flanks; but the driver with much fuss goes to the side of the beast, and pretends to unburden it of—one straw. And that one straw he holds under the eye of the camel, which, satisfied that it has been sensibly relieved, gets up and shamles on. Our consciences are as easily satisfied when heavy burdened as the stupid camel. One straw—nay the semblance, the shadow of a straw—taken from them contents us; we rise, draw a long breath, shake our sides, and amble on our way well pleased.

Lord Lamerton had been doomed by heaven for his guilt in the matter of Archelaus Tubb. Was it not written that he who had taken the life of another should atone therefor with his own life? Who was the cause of the lad's death? Surely Lord Lamerton, who had ordered the destruction of the cottage. If the cottage had been left untouched, the chimney would not have fallen. Mr. Macduff was but the agent acting under the orders of his lordship, and the deepest stain of blood rested, not on the agent, but on his instigator and employer. Saltren had been on the jury when the inquest took place, and he had then seen clearly where the fault lay, and who was really guilty in the matter; but others, with the fear of man in them, had not received his opinion and consented to it, and so there had been a miscarriage of justice.

If a bell-pull be drawn, it moves a crank, and the crank tightens a wire, and that wire acts on a second lever, and this second crank moves a spring and sets a bell tingling. The hand that touches the bell-rope is responsible for the tingling of the bell, however far removed from it. So was

Lord Lamerton responsible for the death of Archelaus, though he had not touched the chimney with his own hand.

Saltren was, moreover, deeply impressed with the reality of his vision, which had grown in his mind and taken extraordinary dimensions, and had assumed distinct outline as his fancy brooded over it. But it did not occur to his mind that fancy had deceived him, for to Saltren, as to all mystics, the internal imaginings are ever more real than those sensible presentiments which pass before their eyes.

Now he knelt in the cave, relieved of all sense of wrongdoing, and thanked heaven for having called him to vindicate its justice on the man whom human justice had acquitted.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NOTHING.

MR. JAMES WELSH occupied a small, respectable house in a row in Shepherd's Bush. The house was very new ; the smell of plaster clung about it. Before the row were young plane trees, surrounded with wire-netting to protect their tender bark from the pen-knives and pinching fingers of boys. Far in the dim future was a prospect of the road becoming an umbrageous avenue ; accordingly, with an eye to the future, those who had planned and planted the row entitled it The Avenue.

Up this avenue of wretched, coddled saplings walked Mr. Giles Inglett Saltren, in the best of spirits, to visit his uncle, the Monday morning after his arrival in town.

Now Giles Inglett Saltren was about to begin his career as a journalist, as a politician, as a man of letters. He had broken away from the position which had degraded and enslaved him, which had cramped his genius, and suppressed his generous emotions.

He had not, indeed, heard from Welsh since he had written to him, but youth is sanguine. He could rely on his uncle finding him work, and he knew his own abilities were of no ordinary quality. He had essayed his powers on several political questions. He had written articles on the Eastern Embroglio, the Madagascar Policy of the French Republic, Port Hamilton, the dispute about the Fisheries,

and Irish dissatisfaction. Very vigorous they were in style, and pulverizing in argumentative force.

He had not sent them to his uncle, but he brought them with him now in a hand-bag. He came early to ensure finding Mr. Welsh at home and to allow time for reading his articles to him, and discussing the terms on which he was to be taken upon the staff of the paper with which his uncle was connected. He figured to himself the expression of the face of Welsh changing, as he listened from incredulity to pleased surprise and rapt ecstasy, and the clasp of hands when the lecture was over, the congratulation on success, and the liberal offer of remuneration that would ensue.

There was one telling passage on Port Hamilton which to Jingles' mind was so finely turned, so rich and mellow in its eloquence, that he repeated it twice to himself as he walked from Shepherd's Bush station to his destination.

"It is really well put," mused Jingles; "and I think if it comes under the eye of the Ministry, that it must materially affect their policy, and, perhaps, decide the question of the retention or surrender of the station. More wonderful things have happened than that it should lead to my being offered a colonial appointment. Not that I would accept a post which was not influential. I am not going to be shelved as a foreign consul. I intend to be where I can put my mark on my times, and mould the destinies of the people. It would not be surprising were the Conservative Government to endeavour to silence me by the offer of some governorship which would take me from home, and corner me where my influence would be powerless. But I intend to keep my eyes open. I am not one of the men who submit to suppression. Ah! here is Uncle James' door."

He opened the little iron gate. A servant was on the steps, kneeling and scrubbing the threshold. She had managed to kneel on her apron, and tear it out of the

gathers. Her slippers exposed a split over the toe, showing stocking, and the stocking was split over the heel, showing skin. She put her scrubbing-brush to her head to smooth the hair that had fallen forward, over the fringe.

“Is Mr. Welsh at home?”

“Yes’ir. Your card, please?”

She looked at her fingers; they were wet, so she put them beneath her apron, and extended her hand thus covered to receive the card, and nipped it through the integument of coarse linen, then turned and went in, leaving Saltren on the doorstep with the bucket. The soap she had prudently removed within, lest, while she was presenting the card, he might make off with the square. She was up to the dodges of such chaps. So, also, she shut the door behind her, lest he should make off with an overcoat or umbrella. A servant cannot be too careful in the suburbs of London. Presently she returned, re-opened the door, and asked Saltren to kindly step into the master’s study.

Mr. James Welsh was just engaged in unfolding his morning’s paper preparatory to reading, or, rather, skimming it, when Jingles entered.

“Hallo, young shaver!” exclaimed the uncle, laying aside the newspaper somewhat reluctantly. “This is sharp work, dropping in on me before I have had time allowed me to answer your letter. I only came home last night. It is like crossing the frontier simultaneously with declaration of war. If you had waited for my answer you would have saved yourself trouble and the cost of your ticket.”

“There were reasons which made it necessary for me to leave at once.”

“My dear boy, reasons are like eggs in a recipe for a pudding. The pudding is best with them; but it is good without. You wanted to come, and you enrich your coming with reasons. That is the sense of it.”

“But, Uncle James, I have long felt a decided vocation

for a political and literary life, and I have long chafed at the restraints——”

“Young shaver, in the ministerial world—I mean the world of ministers of religion—there are also calls ; but, curiously enough, only such are listened to when the call is from a salary of fifty to a hundred and fifty. I never yet heard of a pastor who listened to a call to leave one of a hundred for one of half that amount. But they jump like frogs when the call is t’other way. You should have learned wisdom from those apostles of light. You have, I fear, thrown up a lucrative situation for nothing. Like the dog in the fable, dropped the piece of meat to bite at a shadow.”

“I have no doubt,” said Jingles gravely, “that at first I shall not earn much ; but I have some money laid by which will serve my necessities till I have made myself a name, and got an assured income.”

“Made yourself a name ! That is what no journalist ever does. Got an assured income ! That comes late. You have not been through the mill.”

“I have in my bag some articles I have touched off, leaders on important matters, of absorbing interest to the public.”

“As what ?”

“Port Hamilton.”

“The public don’t care a snap about that.”

“The Eastern Question.”

“About which you know nothing.”

“The Irish Land Question.”

“On which you are incompetent to form an opinion.”

“Will you look at my articles ?”

“I can’t say. I can tell what they are like without your opening the bag. I know exactly the style of these school-boy productions. If you particularly desire it, I will run my eye over them ; but I tell you beforehand, they are good for nought. Mind you, I don’t expect that a writer

of a leader knows any more of his subject than do you; but he does know how to affect a knowledge he does not possess, and disguise his ignorance; and he has a certain style that belongs to the business. It is with journalism as with acting. An amateur proclaims himself in every sentence. The ass's ears project from under the lion's skin. There are little tricks of the trade, a margin for gag, that must be employed and utilised, and only a professional is at his ease, and has the familiar tricks at his disposal, and gag at the end of his tongue. Can you manage shorthand?"

"Shorthand! No."

"Pity that. I might have got you some reporting jobs."

"But I do not want reporting jobs."

"Then you will get nothing."

Jingles was rather offended than cast down.

"I see what it is, Uncle Welsh," he said in a tone of irritation, "you journalists are a close corporation, and you will not admit an intruder. You are jealous of an invasion within your circle, just as a parcel of commercials resent the entry of any but a commissioned bagman into their coffee-room."

"Not a bit; but we do object to a raw bumpkin who has not gone through his apprenticeship giving himself airs, and pretending an equality with us who have drudged at the trade till we have mastered its technicalities."

"I presume that a good education and brains qualify a man to write."

"Not necessarily—certainly not to write leaders. I dare say we might hand over to you the reviewing of children's books. That would come within your range."

"It is an insult to offer such a thing."

"Indeed! You know little of literature or you would not say so. Formerly, when education was scarce, there were but a few writers, and they were well paid. Now education is universal, and every one who can handle a pen

thinks he can write, even if he be imperfectly acquainted with spelling. Education now is as common, as general, as pocket-handkerchiefs. Both were luxuries fifty years ago. Literature is glutted with aspirants ; brain is as common as æsthetic colours, as embroidered sunflowers, and Japanese lacquer. What is rare is muscle. Learn some mechanical art, and you will find biceps pay better than brain."

"You know very well I have not the health to adopt the trade of an artisan."

"Then become a preacher ; and here let me give you advice. If you want to become a popular preacher, and a power in the pulpit or on the platform, tear down. It is thankless work to build up ; that takes time, demands patience, and does not command immediate popularity and ready applause. You appeal to no passion when constructive. Passion is your assistant in destruction. Every man has so much of the savage in him that he likes the war-path and the taste of blood. You appeal to what you know is in all, when you give a war-whoop, and brandish a tomahawk. There is some picturesqueness and a sense of power, in whooping and whirling the axe ; there is only prose in smoking calumets of peace."

"I have no fancy for the pulpit ; but I should like to become a political speaker."

"We can try you at some village meeting ; but the pay is not much. Take my advice and return to Orleigh."

"That is impossible. I have burnt my ships. I can never recross the threshold of the house till I am recognised."

"What—as a literary lion ? As a stump orator ?"

"No, uncle, as Lord Lamerton's son."

"As—as his—what ?"

Mr. James Welsh burst into a fit of laughter, and when he was exhausted, exploded, in spite of exhaustion, into a second peal.

Jingles maintained his gravity. His brow contracted. He folded his arms across his breast, and stood sternly waiting till this unseemly ebullition of merriment had subsided, in the attitude in which Napoleon appears in Horace Vernet's celebrated picture, on Saint Helena, looking at the setting sun.

"You must excuse me," said he at last, "if I say that this is not the way in which I expected to be received. First you scoff at my honourable ambition to be a man of letters, and then you explode into indecent laughter when I mention the fact of my parentage with which you are perfectly familiar, though it is not known to the world at large."

"By Jove, Giles, I did not suppose you were such a fool."

"I do not understand you."

"I may say, Giles, that I do not understand *you*. Do you mean seriously to assure me that you give credence to that cock-and-bull tale?"

"Uncle Welsh, I believe my mother's word."

"Far be it from me to say anything to a son disrespectful of his mother; and in this case I merely point out to you the richness and exuberance of your mother's fancy. Penelope embroidered by day, and by night unpicked her day-work. My dear boy, it is, perhaps, a matter of regret that my sister contents herself with embroidery, and does not complement her work by unpicking the fantastic and highly-coloured figures that needle, her tongue, has elaborated. She is like a magic-lantern projecting pictures upon smoke, sheets, or blank walls, making those surfaces alive with forms and faces. You really would suppose that the man in bed was actually swallowing the rats that ran into his mouth, and that Blue Beard in very truth rolled his eyes and cut off his wife's head, and that the cabbage was converted into Snip the Tailor. But, my dear nephew, they are phantasms. Go up to them, touch, observe, there is

only smoke or whited wall. I have the highest respect for my sister's genius. I bow before her imagination, and adore it ; but remember what Paley said of the imagination—that it is the fertile mother of error. My good sister's delusive faculty seems to have become mamma to an extravagant blunder, which you are lovingly nursing."

"Then you place no reliance on my mother's account?"

"Wait a moment." Mr. Welsh went to the bookcase. "Here is a peerage. Turn up 'Lamerton, Baron,' and see where his lordship was at that time that you were begun to be thought about. He was not in England—had not been there for two or three years. I knew that as well as the author of the peerage, perhaps better ; for I was at Orleigh at that time, a fact my sister Marianne forgot when she exhibited to me her magic-lantern slides. I was not then what I am now. I was then thankful for a bit of literary work, and did not turn up my nose at reviewing children's books. I was as glad then to get a chance of putting pen to paper as I now am of getting a holiday from pen and paper."

"And," said Jingles, somewhat staggered by the evidence of the peerage, "you mean to tell me that my mother said—what—what—what was false?"

"Young shaver," said Mr. Welsh, "I read 'Herodotus' in Bohn's translation. I don't even know the letters of the Greek alphabet. I read for professional purposes. I observe that when the father of history comes to a delicate and disputed question, he passes it over with the remark 'I prefer not to express my own opinion thereon.' When you ask me whether what your mother said was true or a lie, I answer with Herodotus, 'I prefer not to express my own opinion thereon.'"

Giles Inglett looked down on the carpet. His lips quivered.

"Young shaver," pursued Mr. Welsh, cheerily, rubbing

his hands together, and taking up his newspaper, as a hint to his nephew to be gone, "you had best return to your inn, and begin to pull out the threads of that elaborate and gorgeous piece of Gobelin your mother has furnished you with. Believe me, under the coloured worsted and floss silk, you will come on very vulgar canvas. It is a sad pity that you should have learned that you are not the son of Stephen Saltren. You might well have been left to share the common belief. Perhaps it was inevitable that you should discover the flaw in your nativity. Some women cannot hold their tongues. I am not sure that the Babylonians acted unwisely when on the occasion of their revolt against Darius, they strangled every woman in the city except their cooks, for, they argued, men can get along without the sex in every other capacity."

The young man was profoundly disturbed. He looked up, and said in a voice that expressed his emotion—

"Uncle, do not jest with me in this matter. To me it is one of deadly earnest. I entreat you speak the truth, for—good heavens! If I am not what I supposed myself to be, I have made a terrible mistake."

"You are no more a son of Lord Lamerton than I am. Marianne—I mean your mother—thinks I am ignorant of the real facts, but I never was, though I said nothing at the time or after."

"Then you know who my father was."

"Yes, I do—but I am not disposed to tell you."

"I insist on knowing."

"You ought never to have been told that you were not what you and the world supposed. Now don't attempt to lift the embroidered veil your good mother has over the mystery. The veil is handsomer than what it conceals."

"But—I have acted on the supposition that I was the son of Lord Lamerton."

"I know you have, and more fool you. You have left

your situation as tutor in his house and a respectable income."

"I have done more. I have persuaded Miss Inglett to run away with me."

"You have—what?"

Mr. Welsh dropped his hands and the paper; he stood for a moment in blank amazement. Then the blood rushed into his brow, and his hands clenched.

"You have—you dare not repeat those words."

"It is true. I supposed she was my sister."

"You dirty little blackguard!" cried Welsh, losing all control over himself and his tongue; he sprang towards his nephew, brandishing the newspaper. "I will horsewhip you with the only weapon I have, the *Daily News*! You coxcomb! You infamous snob! I'm ashamed to acknowledge you as my sister's child."

"I know that I have made a terrible mistake."

"Mistake is not the word for it. A more detestable, outrageous, caddish act, I could not conceive. Good gracious! I would like to kick you round my table, kick you down the hall, kick you out at my door, down the steps, send you flying along the avenue from tree to tree, and a kick at each. Do you not see, you scoundrel, what you have done?—cast an indelible slur upon the girl's character. Mistake—mistake, indeed! Of all snobbery! Mistake! Get out of my house this instant. You pollute the atmosphere, you. You a son of my lord! You, who have not a drop of honourable blood in your veins, not a spark of proper feeling in your heart, not the smallest grain of gentlemanly, let alone noble sentiment in your whole nature—you contemptible bastard of Sam Ceely."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LESS THAN NOBODY.

GILES INGLETT SALTREN was so completely thrown off his balance by Welsh's repudiations of the story of his parentage, that he did not resent, he hardly heard the burst of indignation that escaped his uncle ; or, if he heard it, his mind was too preoccupied to follow his words, and measure their force, and take umbrage at their grossness. He was overpowered with dismay. What had he done? He could not even realise the extent of the evil he had wrought, nor measure the depth of his own baseness.

But Mr. Welsh was not a man to leave him without having spread out the mass of his misdeeds before him, and held his head down over it, and indicated its most salient features.

"You abominable little snob!" he exclaimed. "Have you forgotten what has been done for you? If his lordship had not taken you from the hard form on which you polished the seat of your corduroys, and set you in an easy chair, you'd have nice callosities now. Probably you would not have been alive at all had he not sent you to the South of France." Mr. Welsh became sarcastic. "No doubt you owe his lordship a grudge because he didn't let you go at once to kingdom come instead of detaining you here in this Vale of Tears. Mind you, Giles—there is no escape from this fact, that you owe your life to him. To him also you

owe your education. To him you owe it that, supposing you had lived, you are not now a horny-handed ploughboy, that you know how to use a pocket-handkerchief, and don't put your knife in your mouth."

Mr. Welsh thrust his hands into his pockets, and stood with legs apart looking scornfully at his nephew.

"Pray, Mr. Giles Inglett, how would you like to go back to potato pasty and cold boiled junk of bacon? To an early dinner, and swipes instead of claret? To getting your clothes at a slop-shop, instead of being fitted by a tailor? To being without books and magazines and reviews? Are you aware that you have earned not one of the luxuries or even comforts of civilized life? That they have come to you undeserved as does free Grace? Upon my word, you make my blood splutter! Shall I tell you what would have been the end of you had not Lord Lamerton come to the rescue? After you were ill you would have been cared for, or not cared for, after the fashion of common folk's children, and your mother's haphazard way of doing everything, allowed to get your feet wet, and stand in draughts, neglected one day, coddled the next, till your weak lungs gave way, and rapid consumption set in. Shall I tell you what would have been the course of Act II? Then you would have been mewed up in that dismal back bedroom at Chillacot, with the ultramarine wash on the walls, and the snapped, emerald-green, silver-paper fly trap suspended in the middle of the room, and the blistered mirror and the window looking out at a dripping rock, ugh! There you would have lain and coughed; and when an attempt was made to light the fire, the smoke would have refused to try the road up the chimney, and preferred that to your lungs; and when the window was opened to let the smoke out it would have let in the smell of the pigstye. When you wanted a book to enliven you, you would have been given Baxter's 'Saints' Rest' or a Methodist Missionary Magazine, and death itself would

have been welcome as an escape from such literature. You would have needed wine, and not had it; cod-liver oil, and not had it; grapes, and not had them; calves' foot jelly, and had to do without. You would have been given thin gruel, and fried india-rubber, that playfully considered itself rump steak, much as you consider yourself a nobleman, and leaden dough, greasy bacon, and lukewarm bad tea. Your bed would have been lumpy and made occasionally, and your sheets changed now and then, and your pillow-case assuming the adhesiveness to your cheek of postage stamps; and there would have been a draught like a mill-race pouring in through that gap—I know it—under the door. When you wanted to sleep by day, your mother would be scouring pans in the back kitchen underneath, and when so inclined at night, your father, on the other side of the partition, would be snoring like John Willett. As you grew weaker, and more unable to endure worry, in would have come the captain, to exhort and expound, and stir and whip up your weary soul into a caper of screaming terror. You would have longed for death as an escape from the smells and the smoke, and the crude blue, and the draught, and the knots in your mattress, and the Missionary Magazines, and the pigs in the yard, and the benzoline lamp."

Mr. Welsh stooped and picked up his newspaper, which lay crumpled on the floor. He smoothed it, and folded it on the table. Then he looked hard at his nephew. Giles remained motionless, with eyes on the carpet; his brow was troubled and his lips trembling. He was very pale.

"That is how you would have ended as a boy of seventeen," pursued Mr. Welsh, remorselessly, mercilessly. "Your life you owe to Lord Lamerton, your mind has been expanded and enriched by him. Had he not sent you to college what would have been the range of your ideas? What would you have known of Shakespeare, Thackeray, Pope, Goethe, and Dante? What appreciation of art?

You would have been as incapable of judging between a good painting and a daub, of discriminating between Tannhäuser and Sankey and Moody, as any chawbacon. What I have learned, I have learned with labour, I had no masters, no hand to help me over the stile. I wish I had had your advantages, but no Lord Lamerton took me up. I had not that luck. I have had to fight my own way. I daresay you think it inconsistent in me to take the part of his lordship against my own nephew, but that is because your conscience is disordered. I fight him tooth and nail, because he is an aristocrat and I a democrat. It is my business to attack the Tories and the landed interest and the House of Lords. I am a politician, and in politics all is fair; but we are now in another region altogether, in that of common honesty, and domestic relations; I look on my lord, not as a nobleman, but as a father, and a kind-hearted man who has done much for you; and I am able to take the gauge of your conduct accordingly. You have behaved infamously towards your benefactor, you have hurt him where he is most sensitive—hitting, you contemptible little coward, below the belt. You have stained the pure name of his only daughter, tarnished the honour of an irreproachable house. Who will believe that the girl ran away with you, because she supposed that you were her brother? Everyone knows that you are nothing of the kind. Should it leak out that you are not Captain Saltren's son, how will it mend matters if it be shown that you are the bastard brat of old blear-eyed, one-handed, limping Samuel Ceely?"

Giles winced, he raised both his hands, half beseechingly, half as if to protect himself from the words which struck him as blows. It was a convulsive, not a purposed movement. Also he looked up for a moment, and attempted to speak, but said nothing, the words died away in his throat. Then his head fell again.

"You say you have saved some money," Welsh went

on ; “ whose money ? That which Lord Lamerton gave you. How many hundreds of pounds do you suppose you have cost him ? In sending you to Bordighera, in doctors’ bills, in school and college accounts ? You swaggered at Oxford as a gentleman, and Lord Lamerton paid for it. He furnished your rooms in college, paid your battels. You invited your friends to breakfasts and wines, and he paid for them. Who but he put the clothes on your back, hung the pictures on your walls, fitted neat boots on your feet, and supplied you with that silk pocket-handkerchief you are now using to wipe the shame drops off your brow with ? And—in return for all this, you stab him to the heart and blast the fair name of his child ! Good heavens ! I feel as uncomfortable in your presence as would Mr. Gladstone in a lodge of Primrose Dames on St. Benjamin’s day. But there !—enough about your despicable self. It is high time something were done about Miss Inglett. I’ll go with you. What a nuisance it is that Tryphœna is just now without a cook. I’ll bring the girl here, nevertheless, if she has nowhere else to go to ; or I will run down with her myself to Orleigh, or I’ll take her to any relation she may have in town. You come with me, you mean little cad, as far as your inn, or lodgings, or where the deuce you are, and leave me there. Don’t show your pasty face again. We have seen already too much of you.”

He rang the bell, and the maid-of-all-work appeared.

“ Susan, turn, or take off your apron, and run and fetch me a hansom.”

“ Please, sir, an’ if I don’t come on an ’ansom ? ”

“ Then a cab. Come, sharp ! ”

He said no more. He was agitated, because very angry. He went out for his hat and gloves, and an umbrella, opened the latter, and refolded it ; then he discovered that he was in a shabby morning coat, so he changed it upstairs,

and put on his boots in the hall, and then returned for his newspaper.

By this time Susan had arrived, seated in a four-wheeler. She had not encountered a hansom.

"Go on," said Welsh to his nephew, "I'll follow." He took his newspaper from the table, and brought it with him to the cab.

The direction was given to the driver, and the vehicle started. Welsh would not speak another word to Giles. He threw himself back with a grunt in the cab, and began to read his paper.

Jingles looked dreamily forth from the window on his side. The cab was being driven along Gold Hawk Road; there was not much traffic in it that morning; a coal-cart, a Shepherd's Bush omnibus were passed. The cabman drew up, and swore at an old lady who in crossing the road had dropped a parcel of tracts, which scattered in all directions, and who returned almost under the feet of the horse to recover some of the papers. Mr. James Welsh uttered an exclamation. Saltren did not notice it, he was in a stunned condition unable to take observation of anything, unable to do more than reiterate in his mind, "I have made a mistake—a fatal mistake!" He was unable even to consider in what way it could be rectified, if capable of rectification. He was not in a condition to weigh his uncle's proposals what to do with Arminell. He did not even feel his uncle's rude remarks, they passed over him without producing an impression, so deadened were his faculties by the consternation in which he was. His brain was like a sewing-machine in full operation, with a needle in it, stab—stab—stabbing, and always carrying the same thread, "I've made a mistake—a fatal mistake!" and making therewith a lock stitch incapable of unravelment, that went round and round both heart and brain, and bound them together.

"Good God!" exclaimed Welsh, and let drop his paper

on his lap. Then he turned, "Giles!" he shouted in his nephew's ear. "Confound the fellow, are you asleep? I did think I had heard the worst, but there is worse behind! Lord—this is awful! Giles—you fool—look at the paper."

The young man took the sheet mechanically. The fly jolted, and he could not read. He laid the paper down. "My eyes are dazzled," he said, "I cannot make out the print. Besides, I am indifferent to news."

"You must not be indifferent. The news concerns you particularly."

"I don't care about politics," said Giles irritably, "I am worried, crushed. I have made a mistake—an awful, a fatal mistake."

"This is not about politics at all," shouted his uncle. "Lord! how shall I break the tidings to Miss Inglett? I wish I had brought my wife. Women do these things better than men. But, as we have no cook, Tryphœna is engaged this morning in the kitchen, up to her ears, above her ears, judging from the condition of the top of her head, in work—I must do it. I hope that Miss Inglett has not seen a newspaper this morning."

"Well—then—what is it?" asked young Saltren impatiently.

"What is it? Just this," answered Welsh grimly and with vehemence, "Lord Lamerton is dead."

"Dead!" Giles Saltren was frozen with horror.

"Yes—dead. Found dead near Chillacot, fallen down the cliff whilst on his way to see your father. Of course there are suspicions of foul play. Nothing as yet certain."

"Found dead!" The young man gasped for breath. The muscles of his chest contracted and a pain as though a bayonet had stabbed him shot through his heart. He was suffocating, he gasped for breath. The windows of the cab began to spin round him, the back of the cab with the cushions swung round to the front, and the front lights

went behind, and the side windows rose and hung over his head, then revolved and were beneath his feet. Mr. Welsh let down the glass near the young man, as he saw the condition into which he was falling, and that he was incapable of doing this for himself.

"Yes," said his uncle, "dead—that is what has come on us now, and there is mischief behind. That mad, fanatical fool, the captain—I should not wonder if he were involved in it, with his visions, and trumpets, and vials, and book of the Gilded Clique. He ought to have been locked up long ago. He took everything in solemn earnest; he believed in Marianne's rhodomontade; he swallowed her lies whole. As far as I can guess this is what happened. Lord Lamerton discovered that Miss Inglett was gone, gone with you, and without a word to any one went to Chillacot over the down to make enquiries of the captain about the fugitives. How he came to fall over the cliff on his way, God knows! But of this I am very certain, that it was you, Giles, who sent him on the road that led to death. He would not have gone to Chillacot had he not had need to go there to enquire after you. So now, Giles, what do you think of yourself—eh?"

Young Saltren covered his face with his hands, and sank fainting into the bottom of the cab.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ANOTHER BREAK-DOWN.

ARMINELL had awoke to the fact that she had made a mistake before that conviction had been brought home to the mind of Jingles ; but she entertained not the shadow of a suspicion how radical that mistake was.

She became conscious that she had put herself in a false position almost as soon as she had taken the false step. At the first large station the guard had been obtrusively obliging, and a little familiar. He had allowed her to see that he regarded her and Giles as a young couple starting on their honeymoon tour ; that he took a friendly interest in them, and he assured them he would allow no one to invade their compartment. He looked in on them half-way, to know how they were getting on ; whether she would desire refreshments to be brought her to the carriage ; whether she would like to have the blinds drawn down.

Arrived in town, they went to a quiet private hotel in Bloomsbury, mostly frequented by literary persons consulting the library of the British Museum. Jingles had not been there before. He knew of the hotel only by repute.

The landlady, an eminently respectable person, hesitated at first about receiving the young people. She did not understand the relation in which they stood to each other, and she looked inquisitively at Arminell's left hand. There was not a trace of family likeness that she could discover in their faces, when young Saltren explained that they were

brother and sister. A further explanation was necessary when he gave his name as Saltren, and hers as Inglett. Then he regretted that he had not gone to a large hotel, where no questions would have been asked. He had considered his pocket, and Arminell's wishes. He could not afford a heavy expense, and she shrank from publicity.

Next morning Arminell woke with a sense of depression she could not shake off. As she dressed, the tears of mortification rose into her eyes. She was vexed with herself, and vexed with Jingles. She knew that what she had done must wound her father, and compromise herself, at all events, for a while. She had taken the step in a fit of pique at her father's desire to get rid of her, and of romantic enthusiasm, to force him to acknowledge Jingles. She had felt convinced that in no other way could he be induced to do this. She entertained no particular admiration for young Saltren, no great affection for him, only a girlish eagerness to see a misunderstood and ill-used man put in his proper place and acknowledged by the world. When she met Jingles at breakfast in the coffee-room, there was mutual restraint between them of which both were conscious; and in Arminell's heart a little welling up of wrath against him. She knew that the feeling was ungenerous. He was less to blame than herself—that is, she had proposed the elopement; but then he was older than herself, and as a man ought to have pointed out the impropriety of the proposal. Now it was too late. The die was cast which must mould the rest of her life, and of what nature that die was she could not yet tell.

Sunday passed quietly. Arminell remained for the most part in her own room, and young Saltren also kept secluded, going through, recopying, and improving his article on Port Hamilton, which he regarded as his masterpiece.

On Monday, at breakfast, Saltren told her that he would go at once, early in the day, to consult his uncle, and that

then they would go together in search of suitable lodgings. The looking out for lodgings could be done in the afternoon, as their nature would be determined by the amount of income on which Saltren could reckon.

"I suppose," he said, "that my uncle can help me into getting the composition of a leader every alternate day as a beginning, and if I get five guineas for a leader, that will make fifteen in the week. Then, I suppose, I can do reviewing, and write for magazines, and make about thirty pounds a week, that will be, say fifteen hundred a year, as a beginning. I have reckoned the year as one of fifty instead of fifty-two weeks, because I shall have to allow myself a short holiday. On fifteen hundred a year we ought to have a nice villa residence, with garden and conservatories. What do you say to a Queen Anne house at Turnham Green? I, myself, rather incline to Chislehurst."

When he was gone, Arminell, left to herself, had returned to her bedroom, to find it not ready for her. So she went downstairs again, and sat by the window in the coffee-room, looking into the street through the wire-gauze blind, not thinking of and interested in what passed in the street, but turning in mind to Orleigh, to her pretty chamber there; to the breakfast room, with the windows to the east, and the sun flooding it; to the table with its silver, and flowers, and porcelain. How small everything in this inn was, and how lacking in freshness and grace!

Her father's cheery face had been a feature at the meal, as was also her step-mother, fresh, gentle, pale, and dove-like in movement and tone. She remembered these things now that she had cast them from her, and found that they had been pleasant, and were not to be recalled without a beating of the pulse, and a rising in the throat.

Two gentlemen were at breakfast at a table near her, and were eating eggs—London eggs—and the savour of eggs, especially London eggs, in a low room is not agreeable.

They were talking about the tribes of Northern Asia, Samojeds, Ostiacks, Tungus, Vogulose, about brachycephalic and dolichocephalic heads, and agglutinative tongues, and linguistic roots ; and then one of the gentlemen dropped some of his egg on his beard, and continued to eat and talk of agglutinative tongues, and ethnological peculiarities, and Turanian characteristics, without observing it ; and the drop of yolk coagulated on his beard, and moved with his jaw, and became agitated and excited over the linguistic affinities of the Tchuchtchees with the Koriacks on one side and the Yuckaheres on the other.

Arminell was teased both by the drop of yolk from which she could not withdraw her eye, and by the vehemence of the disputants, and by the—to her—uninteresting nature of the topic that was discussed. She forced herself to look into the street, and observe the passers-by ; but in another minute fell to ruminating on the condition of the gentleman's beard, to wondering whether he had yet wiped the egg-drop away, or why his friend did not point it out to him ; and then her eye mechanically travelled back to the beard, and the gamboge spot on it. Presently a stout, shabbily-dressed lady entered with her two plain daughters, all three with that grey complexion that makes one think the heads must be cut out of Jerusalem artichoke. The mother had puffy cheeks, and small beady eyes. She talked loudly to her daughters, loudly enough to be heard by all in the room, about her distinguished acquaintances, her butler, and footmen, and lady's-maid, and coachman, and carriages, and gradually subdued the gentlemen who had been arguing over the ethnology of Northern Asia, and set them wondering how it was that this stout party and her daughters had come to so small an inn, and were not occupying a suite in the Hotel Metropole.

Arminell had endured the talk of the learned men, but the vulgar clack of this underbred woman was insupport-

able. She rose and ascended the stairs to her bedroom, which was now, fortunately, ready for her.

This room did not command the street. It looked out at the mews, and beyond the mews at a row of brick houses, seen above the wall enclosing the back premises. In the mews yard were some carriages being washed, and grooms with their braces discharged from their right shoulders, brushing and combing their horses. Over the stables were the windows of the dwellings of the cabdrivers and their wives, and of the ostlers; and there were sickly attempts at flower gardening in some of them. Out of others hung articles of clothing to be aired or dried. A multitude of dingy sparrows hopped about in the yard, and also a considerable and apparently inexhaustible number of equally dingy children.

Beyond the wall of the backyard of a house in the row was a gaunt Lombardy poplar, trunk and branches sable as the stalks of maidenhair fern. What a pretty view had been that which Arminell had commanded from her bedroom window at Orleigh! The sweeps of green turf in the park, the stately trees, the cedars, and the copper beech, and the silver birch! How the birds had sung in the morning about her window! How sweet had been the incense of the wisteria trusses of lilac flowers entering at the open casement!

What would her father say at her departure? Into what a predicament had she put him? She had forced him into one from which he could not escape without publishing his own dishonour, without allowing his wife, and the parish, and the county, and society generally to know that once on a time he had behaved in a manner unworthy of a gentleman to a poor servant girl. He to whom every one in the place, in the county, looked up as a spotless and worthy John Bull, was to be proclaimed an impostor, and made the talk of idle and malicious tongues.

"If a man has done wrong," she said to justify herself, "he must bear the consequences. It is cowardly to try and hide the act, evade what it entails, and base to appear before the world under false pretences. Let him acknowledge the wrong he has done, and men will then respect him because he is open, and does not shrink from those consequences a wrong act brings on the wrong-doer."

But this did not satisfy her. It might be true, it was true, that this was the only right and honourable course for one to take who had erred, but—was she, his daughter, the proper person to force her father into the course and out of the road he had elected to pursue? Was it for her hand to rip up old wounds, and drag into the light the dark secrets he strove to bury out of sight? Was it for her to reveal a stain which disfigured the whole house? Was it for her to shock her step-mother, and disturb her trust? To mar the domestic unity and mutual esteem which had been so perfect?

Lady Lamerton had her weaknesses, but she had also her strength, and her strength was the rectitude of her heart, which made her do her duty with all her power. In pursuance of this sense of duty, Lady Lamerton had been unfailingly kind to Arminell. The girl, looking back, saw this now, and was stung with self-reproach, because in return for this treatment she cast the apple of discord between her father and mother, and broke what to her ladyship was the most precious jewel she possessed—her reverence for my lord.

And how—when it pleased Arminell to return home after all the disturbance she had caused, the pain and humiliation she had occasioned—how would she be received again by those she had wronged and hurt? She had no doubt upon this point. She knew that she would be received with open arms, and without a word of reproach from one or the other.

Then Arminell began to sob, and she saw no more the

ostler curricombing his horse, nor the woman shaking a table-cloth out of a window, nor the sparrows quarrelling for the crumbs, nor the back of a maid seated outside a house on a window-ledge cleaning the glass, or she saw these things through a watery film.

She was roused by a tap at her door. She hastily dried her eyes, and stood up, with her back to the light, that her discomposure might be unobserved, and called to the person without to enter.

A waiter opened the door and announced that a gentleman had called, and was below in a private sitting-room. He extended a tray, and Miss Inglett took from it a card, and read, "Mr. James Welsh."

"I will come down directly," she said.

The waiter bowed and closed the door.

Arminell tarried for a moment only, to recover herself, and then descended. She expected to see Jingles with his uncle, but he was not in the room.

"At your service, Miss Inglett. I am the uncle of Hansel who has run away with Grethel. You find that you have not come to the cottage of almond rock, with windows of barley sugar. You are not, I suppose, interested in politics?"

"No, or only slightly. Social subjects—"

"Neither in Monday's paper. Never in my life saw one with less of interest in it, no news, nothing but a Temperance Demonstration at Exeter Hall, presided over by the Reverend Jowles. It is not worth your while looking into a paper to-day."

"Is Mr. Saltren returned?" asked Arminell.

"Damped off," replied Welsh. "That is a process whereby an amateur loses a good many cuttings and seedlings. Hansel came to me with any amount of young hopes and ambitions and cockscombs—especially, and I have damped them all off. Expected to make a fortune in literature, wanted to tread the walks of political journalism

—as well try to tread the tight rope without previous education. Miss Inglett, you will see no more of him. So what is Grethel to do without her Hansel?”

He paused for a minute but received no answer, not, perhaps, that he expected one, but he allowed time for what he had said to soak into her mind before he went on.

“There is a story,” continued Welsh, who purposely spun out what he had to say, knowing that it was an unpleasant dose, and therefore to be mixed with jam. “There is a story by a classic author, whom I have read only in English, concerning a young man named Lucius who once saw a woman smear herself with an unguent, whereupon she flew out at the window, transformed into a bird. Lucius got hold of the unguent and applied it to himself and found himself to have become—not a bird by any means—simply an ass. Our good friend has been going through the same experience. You, Miss Inglett, have spread your wings, and Giles comes trotting after with a bray. You need not be afraid—he will not show himself again. He has looked on himself in a mirror, and is hiding his ears.”

“Do you mean, Mr. Welsh, that your nephew has deserted me?”

“The ass is just now so ashamed of himself, that he is in hiding. But no more about him. What about yourself? I place myself unreservedly at your disposal. I will reconduct you to Orleigh, by the next train, and telegraph for the carriage to meet us at the station.”

“I cannot go back—just now.”

“Have you a relation, a lady, in town who could receive you?”

“Lady Hermione Woodhead—my aunt.”

“Then I will take you to her at once.”

“I cannot go to her.”

“Then Mrs. Welsh will be happy to accommodate you. She is without a cook, but that don't matter. She can make

good pastry. Come along with me to Shepherd's Bush. There will be rissoles for dinner to-day as we had joint yesterday; and we will buy a pair of soles on our way."

"I cannot understand," said Arminell. "I came here with your nephew. I suppose you are aware that he is my half-brother."

"Half-fiddlesticks," exclaimed Mr. Welsh. "My dear young lady, you have been carried off your feet by romantic fancies, which at a certain ingenious age inflate the head as carburetted hydrogen does a goldbeaterskin bag. Giles has been in the same condition, but I have pricked the bag and let out the nonsense. Now his head is in a condition of collapse. That which you were told about his parentage is all nonsense."

"Do you mean—" Arminell did not finish the sentence, she was interrupted by Welsh.

"Yes, I do," he said. "I know all the circumstances. I know more about them than my sister Marianne supposes. Marianne is an utter liar, has a physical infirmity, I suppose, which prevents her tongue from being straight. It describes as many curls as a corkscrew on the St. Gothard line. She has about as keen a sense of truth as a Russian diplomatist, and as much bounce as General Boulanger. Now, then—as you see from which direction the wind blows, and where lie the reefs, perhaps you will allow a pilot to come unsignalled on board, and turn your head off the breakers."

"I have made a mistake—a fatal mistake," was all that Arminell could say, dropping her hands at her sides.

"Those are precisely my nephew's words—literally the same; which is not to be wondered at, because you have both fallen together into the same error. Come, I must help you out of your difficulties. What will you do? Go to your aunt? Return home? Or come to Shepherd's

Bush to rissoles and a pair of soles, fried or boiled as you prefer ? ”

“ But where is Mr. Saltren ? I ought to see him.”

“ He will not show his face again. He is at the present moment like blancmange from which the isinglass has been omitted, in a condition of mental and moral imbecility.”

A tap at the door, and without waiting for an answer Giles Inglett Saltren entered, erect, with firm step, and a resolute face.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A RALLY.

GILES INGLETT SALTREN had left the cab at Cumberland Gate, when the momentary faintness had passed. He wished to be alone, in the fresh air, and with his own thoughts. His uncle had detained the cab till he saw that his nephew was better. He left him on a bench in the park and bade him remain there till his return from the interview with Arminell.

The young man felt the relief of being alone. The vibration of the carriage, his uncle's voice, his own self-reproach, had, combined with the shock of the news of his lordship's death, brought about the slight fit of unconsciousness. He was in that overwrought condition of nervous tension in which another touch would be insupportable ; and Welsh's finger was not light, he twanged the fibres in his nephew's heart, not as if he were playing a harp with finger-balls, but as if he were performing on a zither with his nails. The air was cool ; the bench on which Jingles was seated had not another occupant. The great open space in Hyde Park devoted to political meetings was sparsely peopled at that time in the morning ; he was not likely to be disturbed, and the rumble of vehicles along Uxbridge Road and Oxford Street produced a soothing effect rather than the contrary.

A Frenchman was walking along the path before his bench with a walking-stick ; he had found a bit of slate in the way, and with his cane he flipped it along a few feet, then stopped, and flipped it on to the grass ; went upon the turf and flipped it back into the path. Then he sent it forward, past Jingles on his bench, and so on as far as Cumberland Gate, where the young man lost sight of Monsieur, and was unable to see whether he continued to drive the scrap of slate before him up Oxford Street in the direction of his haunts in Leicester Square, or whether he left it under the arch.

Till the Frenchman had disappeared, Giles Saltren did not begin to consider his own trouble. He could not do so till the bit of slate was gone beyond his range, with Monsieur after it. Watching the man was a sensible relief to him. When one has run, a pause allows the recovery of breath, and abates the pulsations, so did this diversion of attention serve to relieve Jingles, to lull the agony of remorse, and enable his mind to regain something of evenness and tone.

When a man has been struck on the head by a hammer, he falls. Jingles had received three stunning blows, and recovery could not be immediate. His sanguine hopes of living by his pen had been upset, and that was a blow to his self-esteem. Then his belief in his noble parentage had been knocked over. And lastly he had heard of Lord Lamerton's death—and whether that were accidental or not, he could hardly doubt that he had brought it about, for his lordship would not have left his guests to go to Chillacot, had he not been impelled to do so by learning of the elopement.

There are moments in the lives of most of us when we come on new scenes that are epoch-making in our life's-history. I shall never forget as such my first view of Mont Blanc, from the Col de Balme, and of a portion of the

moon's surface through the Cambridge Observatory telescope, or the first sight of death. Some of these first sights are invested with pleasure unutterable, others with infinite pain ; and of such latter are often those peeps within ourselves which we sometimes obtain.

What atmospheric effects, what changing lights, all beautiful, invest the outer landscape with magic, even where the scenery is tame. How rarely is it displeasing to the eye. And it is the same when we turn our eyes inwards, and contemplate the landscape of our own selves, what glories of light flood all, what richness of foliage clothes all, how picturesque are the inequalities ! How vast the surface to the horizon ! And yet, it sometimes happens, not often, and not even to all, that a shadow falls over the scene and blots out all its comeliness, and then ensues a flare, a lightning flash, and we see all—no longer beautiful, but infinitely ghastly.

Saint Theresa, in one of her autobiographical sketches, says that she was shown her own self, on one occasion of introspection, not as she was wont to view it, but as it was in naked reality, and she could never after recall the vision without a shudder.

Who sees himself as he is ? Who wishes to do so ? Who would not be offended were you to exhibit to his eyes a picture of himself as he is ? No one likes his own photograph, for the sun does not flatter. But no photographs have yet been taken of man's interior self ; if they were, no one would consent to look on his own ; he would spend all his fortune in buying up the copies and destroying the plates.

We are accustomed to view ourselves as those do who stand on the Brocken, magnified a thousand fold, with rainbow haloes about our heads. I have known a little fellow, who reached my elbow, strut with infinite consequence, and gesticulate with tragic dignity on the Brocken,

before his own shadow projected on a cloud, nimbus-girded, and vast as the All-Father of Norse mythology. A breath of wind passed, and the phantom vanished. But we carry our Brocken shadow about with us everywhere, and posture to it, and look up to it, with an awe and admiration that slides into worship; and very rarely does the cold east wind sweep it away. But there remains this consolation to the Brocken shadow worshipper, that when the phantom form disappears, *nothing* remains behind, and it is a satisfaction, a poor one, but still a satisfaction, when the blast has dispelled our ideal self before which we have bowed, to discover behind it simple nonentity. There would be disenchantment indeed, and a graver walk, and a more subdued voice, and a less self-asserting tone, but there would not be that exquisite, that annihilating horror that ensues when the scattering of the vapour discloses a reality the reverse at every point of what we had imagined.

In the Egyptian temples hung purple curtains embroidered with gold, and censers perpetually smoked before the veil, and golden lamps, ever burning, diffused a mellow light through the sacred enclosure. What was behind that pictured spangled veil, within the holy of holies? Sometimes a hippopotamus wallowing on straw—or a chattering crane—sometimes, Nothing. We are engaged all our lives in the erection of magnificent temples about ourselves, and in embroidering gold-besprent curtains, and in the burning of frankincense, and in the kindling and feeding of lamps, in these tabernacles; and what is behind the veil? Do we know? Do we ever look? We paint and plate with gold ideal representations of the god within on the propylæum of our temple, but what resemblance does this figure bear to the reality? Do we know? Do we care to know? Will we not rather put out our eyes than compare them? If, by chance, a sudden gleam of sun, a puff of pure air, stir the curtain and reveal the mystery, with what haste we fly to

duplicate the veils, to blind the windows, to nail the curtains to the gilded sideposts, and weight them with lead. How we redouble our prostrations, and make more dense the cloud of incense; how we elaborate our ceremonial, and when the hippopotamus within yawns, or the ibis chatters, we clash our cymbals, boom our drums, peal our trumpets to drown the utterance of the god.

There was in Alexandria no god like unto Serapis, whose temple was the wonder of the world. But one day an impious hand struck off the head, and out of the gilded idol rushed a legion of rats. There is no god, no idol, like the ideal self within the veil; but it does not chance to every one as it chanced to Giles Inglett Saltren, to have its head knocked off and see the vermin scamper out of it. When that does happen, that is a moment never to be forgotten. It is a moment of infinite importance in the life-history, it is a moment determinative of the future. The worshippers of Serapis, after that terrible spectacle, which was also extremely laughable, stood in consternation; and at that moment stood also at the fork of two roads. Either they shuffled off to the left, with their hands in their pockets, damning all religion, and vowing they would believe in nothing thenceforth, or they moved with firm steps along the right-hand road that led to a truer faith.

The same takes place with us when the Serapis of our ideal self is broken and reveals the nest of rats within. Either our moral nature becomes disintegrated, and breaks down utterly and irremediably into unsightly débris, or we turn from the worship of ourselves to seek elsewhere our ideal, and looking to it, attain to a nobler, more generous, an altruistic life.

Mr. James Welsh had not spared Jingles; he had told him plainly, even coarsely, what he thought of him, but no words of his could express the intensity of the sense of infamy that Giles Inglett felt. For a moment he had been

stunned, numbed as hand and foot become numbed for awhile, and then with a tingling and needle-pricking, the moral juices began once more to flow, and the agony of inner pain he felt was the pledge of moral recovery.

As soon as Giles Inglett Saltren began to consider what were the consequences drawn upon him and Arminell by his folly, an almost overpowering desire came over him to fly from England. He had sufficient money to pay his passage across the Atlantic, and to maintain him in a new world till he could obtain a suitable situation. In a new world he might begin life anew, leaving behind his old follies and faults, and make a smooth table of the past. In the old world he could do nothing to remedy what he had wrought; but he put the temptation from him. He saw that to yield to it would be an act of cowardice, and would result in moral ruin. Instinctively, without self-analysis, he reached the conclusion that a single course lay open before him if he were to save his moral self from wreck. The same moment that he became conscious of this, he stood up, and hailed a passing empty hansom.

That moment saw the beginning of a new life in him; new ends, new visions, rose before his eyes.

Thus it was that Giles Inglett Saltren entered the sitting-room where his uncle was engaged with Arminell, and thus it was that he entered it a very different man from what Mr. Welsh had described him.

"How came you here?" asked the journalist. "Did not I tell you to remain in Hyde Park till you were wanted?"

"I have come," answered Giles firmly, "to speak to Miss Inglett. I have a just duty to perform to her, to clear her mind of the clouds I have brought over it. Miss Inglett, I was utterly wrong in supposing that his lordship was—was—what I let you believe him to be, my father. I did him a grievous wrong, I imagined it possible that the best and

most blameless of men had been guilty of the basest conduct. And now that your father is dead—”

“Dead !” echoed Arminell.

Saltren looked at his uncle. He had supposed that Welsh had broken the news to the girl.

“Yes,” said he, and his voice, which before was firm, gave way for a moment. “Your father is dead.”

“Dead !” again repeated Arminell, and put her hands to her brow. She was being stunned by repeated blows, as Saltren had been stunned. “Dead ! Impossible.”

“Miss Inglett, it is as well that you should know all, and know it at once, for action must be taken immediately. Your father has met with an accident—he has been found dead after a fall. I shall return immediately by the express to Orleigh. I go to my mother at Chillacot. You must allow my uncle at once to escort you to Lady Hermione ; place yourself under her protection, and confide to her all the particulars of your leaving home. I will see Lady Lamerton, and she shall telegraph to you at Lady Hermione’s to return to the Park. I will wire at once, in your name, to your mother, to send your lady’s-maid to you at your aunt’s in Portland Place. Your maid will find you there, and attend you home to Orleigh. It is possible that by this means your running away from home with me may remain unknown. You left Orleigh on Saturday, by to-night your maid will be with you in Portland Place, and I shall be seen this evening at Orleigh, where I shall make a point of showing myself. It is therefore not likely that suspicions of my ever having left may arise. There is no time to be lost. You will hear, all too soon, the particulars of your father’s death—about myself I will not speak. I should be ashamed to say a word in self-justification, and my self-reproach is beyond the power of words to express.”

Arminell turned herself about, as though rotating on a

pivot, holding her temples with both hands, and elbows extended.

"Yes," said Mr. Welsh, "this is well considered. Giles, it shall be as you say. I will take Miss Inglett at once to Portland Place, unless she prefers that I should go to her ladyship, and prepare her; and then Miss Inglett can follow. That probably will be the least painful course."

Arminell still swung herself from side to side. She was pale as ashes, and her eyes full of trouble and terror.

"I will go home directly, uncle," said Giles. "I have acted not like a fool only, but wickedly, and I must face the consequences."

Arminell remained stationary, and released her temples.

"What was that you said?" she asked.

"As I have been guilty, not of indiscretion only, but of a crime," said he, gravely, "I must face the consequences, be they what they may." Then Arminell drew a long breath. She recovered her composure for a moment. She recalled what had been her judgment on her father when she thought him guilty.

"I also," she said, and her voice was harsh, "I also have been guilty, not of folly only, but of a crime. I have sinned against my dear, dear father. I will not go to my Aunt Hermione. I will not go back to Orleigh."

"But the repentant prodigal," said Welsh, "in the Gospel story did return."

"When the father was at home to receive him," answered Arminell sharply. "There is not—" She drew another long breath; and then said, "I also will face the consequences."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

GILES SALTREN caught an express and whirled down into the west. He had not taken a ticket for Orleigh Road Station, as he did not choose to get out there, but at the nearest town, and there he hired a light trap in which he was driven to within half a mile of Chillacot, where he dismissed the vehicle and walked on.

He had resolved what to do. He would pay a hasty visit to his mother and then go on to the village, and perhaps call at the Rectory. He must show himself as much as possible.

He had hardly left the trap, when, on turning a corner, he came on Samuel Ceely and Joan Melhuish walking together, arm in arm. The sight brought the blood into his pale face. He was behind the pair, and he was able to notice the shabbiness of the old man and the ungainliness of his walk. This man was his father. To him, the meanest in the parish—not to his lordship, the highest—must he look as the author of his being.

Joan Melhuish knew nothing of Samuel's love affair with Marianne Welsh. She looked up to and admired the cripple, seeing him in the light of her girlish fancy, as the handsome, reckless gamekeeper.

Giles's foot lagged, but he kept his eyes steadily on the man slouching along before him. A new duty had fallen on him. He must provide for the cripple, without allowing the

secret of his relationship to become known, both for the sake of his mother and for that of the trusting Joan.

Samuel Ceely heard his step and turned his head, disengaged his arm from the woman, and extended the mutilated hand towards the young man.

"I say—I say!" began he, with his water-blue eyes fixed eagerly on Jingles. "I was promised a place; Miss Arminell herself said I should have work, two shillings a day, sweeping, and now they say she has gone away and left no directions about me. If you can put in a word with my lady, or with my lord, mind that I was promised it."

"How can you, Samuel, speak of my lord, when you know he is dead?"

"My lord is not dead," answered the old man sharply. "Master Giles is now my lord. I know what I am about."

"And Samuel would do the work wonderfully well," threw in Joan; "of all the beautifulest things that ever I see, is Samuel's sweeping. If they were to give prizes for that as they do for ploughing, Samuel would be rich."

"I should like," said Giles, "to have some particulars about my lord's death."

"'Tis a terrible job, sure enough," answered the woman. "And folks tell strange tales about it, not half of 'em is true. They've sat on him this afternoon."

"The inquest already?"

"Yes, to be sure. You see he died o' Saturday, so he was crowned to-day. Couldn't do it yesterday."

"And what was the verdict? I have been to Huxham to-day"—this was the nearest town.

"Samuel can tell you better than I, sir, I don't understand these things. But it do seem a funny thing to crown a man when he is dead."

"What was the verdict?" asked Giles of Samuel.

"Well," said the old man, shaking his head. "It puzzled the jury a bit. Some said it was an accident, and some that

it was murder ; but the worst of it all is, that it will drive my sweeping at two shillings out of the heads of my lady and Miss Arminell. They'll be so took up wi' ordering of mourning that they'll not think of me—which is a crying shame. If his lordship could but have lived another week till I was settled into my sweeping and victuals, he might have died and welcome, but to go interfering like between me and two shillings, is that provoking I could swear. Not that I say it was his lordship's fault, and I lay no blame on him, but folks do say, that——"

"There now, Samuel," interrupted Joan. "This is young Mr. Saltren you are speaking to and you are forgetting."

"I'm not forgetting," grumbled the old man ; "don't you be always of a flurrying me. Why, if I had had my situation as was promised me, we might have married and reared a family. I reckon one can do that on two shillings a day, and broken victuals from the kitchen. I might take the case into court and sue Captain Saltren for damages."

"Hush, Samuel," interposed Joan nervously, looking at Giles.

"I ain't a-going to be hushed like a baby," said Samuel Ceely irritably ; "I reckon if I don't get my place, we can't marry, and have a family, and where will my domestic happiness be? I tell you, them as chucked his lordship down the Cleave, chucked my family as was to be down with him, and if I can't bring 'em into court for murdering his lordship, I can for murdering my family, of as healthy and red-cheeked children as might have been——all gone," said the old man grimly. "All, head over heels down the Cleave, along of Lord Lamerton."

"How can you talk so?" said Joan reproachfully. "You know you have no children."

"I might have had—a dozen of 'em—seven girls and five boys, and I'd got the names for them all in my head. I might have had if I'd got the sweeping and the broken

victuals as I was promised. What's the difference in wickedness, I'd like to know?" asked the old man sententially, and figuring out his proposition on Saltren's coat with his crooked fingers. "What's the odds in wickedness, chucking over a horrible precipice a dozen sweet and innocent children as is, or as is to be, my family was as certain as new potatoes in June, and now—all gone, chucked down the Cleave. It is wickedness."

"What is that you hinted about Captain Saltren?" asked Giles gravely.

"Oh, I say nothing," answered old Samuel sourly. "I don't talk—I leave that to the woman."

"It does seem a pity," said Joan. "Samuel would have been so useful. He might have gone about the park picking up the sandwich-papers and the corks and bottles, after the public."

"But," said the young man, "I really wish to know what the talk is about in which my father's name is introduced."

"Sir, sir! folks' tongues go like the clappers in the fields to drive away the blackbirds. A very little wind makes 'em rattle wonderfully."

"But what have they said?"

"Well"—Joan hesitated. She was a woman of delicate feeling. "Well, sir, you must not think there is anything in it. Tongues cannot rest, and what they say to-day they unsay to-morrow. Some think that as the captain was so bitter against his lordship, and denounced him as ordained to destruction, that he may have had a helping hand in his death. But, sir, the captain did not speak so strong as Mr. Welsh, and nobody says that Mr. Welsh laid a finger on him. Why should they try to fix it on your father and not on your uncle? But, sir, there is no call to fix it on any one. I might walk over the edge of the Cleave. If a man goes over the brink, I reckon he needs no help to make him go to the bottom."

"The jury couldn't agree, Joan," said Samuel. "Two of 'em wanted to bring in wilful murder against the captain."

"So they did against his lordship in the case of Arkie Tubb. But that was nonsense. His lordship wasn't there. And this is nonsense, just the same."

"But the captain was nigh. Mr. Macduff saw him."

"Well, and he might have seen me, and he did see me a little while afore, as I was coming from Court with some baccy money for you, Samuel. That don't follow that I killed his lordship. Mr. Macduff see'd also Farmer Yole's old grey mare. Be you a going accusing of that old mare of having had a hoof in his lordship's death?"

"Where did Mr. Macduff see my father?" asked the young man.

"On the down. But he didn't see him speak to his lordship, and he couldn't tell to half an hour or three-quarters when it was. So the crowner discharged the jury, just as he did in the case of Arkie, and he got together another, and they found that his lordship had done it accidental."

"For all that," growled Samuel, "folks will always say that the captain helped him over, as he was so set against him."

"Then," said Joan, "it is a shame and a sin if they do. It is one thing to talk against a person, and another thing to lift a hand against him. I've said hard things of you, scores of times; I've said you never ought to have taken the game and sent it off by the mail-cart when you was keeper, and that you couldn't have blown off your hand if you'd not gone poaching, nor put out your hip if you'd been sober—I've said them cruel things scores o' times, but never laid a finger on you to hurt you. I couldn't do it—as you know very well."

She cast an affectionate glance at the cripple; then she went on, "Lord! I forgive and excuse all the frolics of your

youth ; and folks always says things rougher than they mean them."

Instead of going on to Chillacot, as he had at first intended, Giles now resolved on following the road to the village, and returning home later. He must lose no time in showing himself. He trusted that in the excitement caused by the death of Lord Lamerton no questions would be raised about Arminell, and any little suspicions which might have been awakened by her sudden departure would be allayed.

He was not altogether easy about his father, nor satisfied with Joan's justification of him. That the jury had returned a verdict of accidental death was a relief to his mind, but it made him uncomfortable to think that suspicion against his father should be entertained. Giles had little or no knowledge of his father's new craze. He knew that the captain was a fanatic who went heart and soul with whatever commended itself to his reason or prejudice. At one time he took up hotly the subject of vegetarianism, then he became infatuated with Anglo-Israelism, then he believed vehemently in a quack syrup he saw advertised in a Christian paper, warranted to cure all disorders ; after that he became possessed with the teetotal mania, and attributed all the evils in the world, war, plagues, earthquakes, popery, and foot-and-mouth disease to the use of alcohol. Recently he had combined his religious vagaries with political theories, and had made a strange stir-about of both. His trouble at losing his situation as captain of the manganese mine, and his irritation against the railway company for wanting Chillacot had combined to work him into a condition of unusual excitability. Giles had heard that his father had seen a vision, but of what sort he had not inquired, because he was entirely out of sympathy with the spiritual exaltations and fancies of his father.

The village of Orleigh was not what is commonly termed

a "church town," that is to say, it was not clustered about the church, which stood in the park, near the mansion of the Ingletts. In ancient days, when the population was sparse, the priest drew his largest congregation from the manor house, and therein he lived as chaplain and tutor; consequently in many places we find the parish church situated close to the manor house, and away from the village which had grown up later. It was so at Orleigh. The village consisted of a green, with an old tree in the midst, an ale-house, the Lamerton Arms, a combined grocery and grocery store, which was also post-office, a blacksmith's forge, and half-a-dozen picturesque cottages white-washed, with red windows and thatched roofs. Most of these houses had flower gardens before their doors, encouraged thereto by an annual Floricultural Society which gave prizes to those villagers who had the neatest, most cheerful and varied gardens.

Jingles found knots of men standing about the green, some were coming out of, others about to enter the public-house door; another knot clustered about the forge. Women were not wanting, to throw in words.

The dusk of evening had settled in, so that at first none noticed the approach of the young man. He came, not by the road, but across by the blacksmith's garden, where a short cut saved a round. Thus he was in the midst of the men before they were aware that he was near.

He could not catch all that was being said, but he heard that the death of Lord Lamerton occupied their minds and exercised their tongues. His father's name was also freely bandied about.

"I say," exclaimed the village tailor, in a voice like that of a cornrake, "I say that Cap'n Saltren did it. What do you consider the reason why the coroner discharged the jury and called another? I know, if you do not. You don't perhaps happen to know, but I do, that Marianne

Saltren's aunt, old Betsy Welsh, washes for the coroner. Nothing more likely, were he to allow a verdict against the captain, than that his shirt-fronts would come home iron-moulded. Don't tell me there was no evidence. Evidence is always to be had if looked for. Evidence is like snails' horns, thrust forth or drawn in, according to circumstances. If the coroner had wanted evidence, he could have had it. But he was thinking of his shirt-front, and he, maybe, going out to a dinner-party. It is easy done, boil an old nail along with the clothes, and pounds worth of linen is spoiled. I don't blame him," concluded the tailor sententiously. "Human nature is human nature."

"And," shouted a miner, "facts is facts"—but he pronounced them *fax*.

"Lord Lamerton," said a second miner, "wanted to make a new road, and carry it to Chillacot. The cap'n didn't like it, he didn't want to have a station there. He was set against his lordship on that account, for his lordship was a director. If you can prove to me that his lordship wasn't a director, then I shall admit he may have come by his death naturally. I say naught against his lordship for not wanting to have his house undermined, but I do say that the cap'n acted unreasonably and wrongly in not letting the company have Chillacot for the station. If he'd have done that, his lordship would have found us work on the road."

"Ah, Gloyne," called the other miner, "that's it. Fax is fax."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE RISE OF THE TIDE.

"COME here," shouted the blacksmith, who was outside his shop, and still wore his apron, and the smut and rust on his hands and face. "Come here, Master Jingles. You've come into the midst of us, and we want to know something from you. Where is your father? We've seen nothing of him since Friday. If he has not been at mischief, why don't he come forward like a man? Why don't your father show his face? He ain't a tortoise, privileged to draw it in, or a hedgehog, at liberty to coil it up. Where is he? He is not at home. If he is hiding, what is he hiding from unless he be guilty?"

"He may have gone after work," said young Saltren.

"I heard him say," said the shoemaker, "that his lordship was doomed to destruction."

"I know he said it," answered the blacksmith, "and I ask, is a man like to make a prophecy and not try to make what he said come to pass?"

"Human nature is human nature," threw in the tailor.

"And fax is fax," added the miner.

"Then," pursued the blacksmith, "let us look at things as they affect us. His lordship has kept about twenty-three horses—hunters, cobs, ponies and carriage horses—and each has four hoofs, and all wants shoeing once a month,

and some every fortnight. That brings me in a good part of my living. Very well. I ask all who hear me, is his lordship like to keep such a stud now he is dead? Is he like to want hunters? I grant you, for the sake of argument, that the young lady and young gentleman will have their cobs and ponies, but will there be anything like as many horses kept as there have been? No, in reason there cannot be. So you may consider what a loss to me is the death of his lordship. My worst personal enemy couldn't have hit me harder than when he knocked Lord Lamerton over the Cleave. He as much as knocked a dozen or fourteen horses over with him, each with four hoofs, at sixpence a shoe, and shod, let us say, eighteen times in the year."

"You are right," put in the tailor, "landed property is tied up, and his lordship's property is tied up—tied up and sealed like mail bags—till the young lord comes of age, which will not be for eleven years. So, Blatchford,"—addressing the blacksmith—"you must multiply your horses by eleven."

"That makes," said the smith, working out the sum in chalk on the shutter of the shop, "say fourteen horses eighteen times—two hundred and two—and by four—and again by eleven—and halved because of sixpences, that makes five hundred and fifty-four pounds; then there were odd jobs, but them I won't reckon. Whoever chucked Lord Lamerton down the Cleave chucked five hundred and fifty-four pounds of as honestly-earned money as ever was got, belonging to me, down along with him."

"Fax is fax," said the miner.

"And human nature is human nature to feel it," added the tailor.

"There's another thing to be considered," said a game-keeper. "In the proper sporting season, my lord had down scores of gentlemen to shoot his covers, and that brought

me in a good many sovereigns and half-sovs. Now, I'd like to know, with the family in mourning, and the young lord not able to handle a gun, will there be a house full of gentlemen? It wouldn't be decent. And that means the loss of twenty pound to me—if one penny."

"Nor is that all," said the tailor, "you'll have Macduff to keep an eye on you, not my lord. There'll be no more chucking of hampers into the goods train as it passes Copley Wood, I reckon."

The keeper made no other reply than a growl, and drew back.

"There is my daughter Jane, scullery-maid at the Park," said the shoemaker, "learning to be a cook. If her ladyship shuts up the house, and leaves the place, what will become of Jane? It isn't the place I grieve for, nor the loss of learning, for places ask to be filled now, and any one will be taken as cook, if she can do no more than boil water—but it is the perquisites. My wife was uncommon fond of jellies and sweets of all sorts, and I don't suppose these are to be picked off hedges, when the house is empty."

"Here comes Farmer Labett," exclaimed the tailor. "I say, Mr. Labett, did not his lordship let off five-and-twenty per cent. from his rents last fall?"

"That is no concern of yours," replied the farmer.

"But it does concern you," retorted the tailor, "for now that his lordship is dead, the property is tied up and put in the hands of trustees, and trustees can't remit rents. If they were to do so, the young lord, when he comes of age, might be down on them and make them refund out of their own pockets. So that away over the rocks, down the Cleave, went twenty-five per cent. abatement when his lordship fell, or was helped over."

"Ah!" groaned the shoemaker, "and all them jellies, and blanc-mange, and custards was chucked down along of him."

"And now," said another, "Macduff will have the rule. Afore, if we didn't like what Macduff ordained, we could go direct to his lordship, but now there will be no one above Macduff but trustees, and trustees won't meddle. That will be a pretty state of things, and his wife to ride in a victoria, too."

Then a woman called Tregose pushed her way through the throng, and with loud voice expressed her views.

"I don't see what occasion you men have to grumble. Don't y' see that the family will have to go into mourning, and so get rid of their colours, and we shall get them. There's Miss Arminell's terra-cotta I've had my eye on for my Louisa, but I never reckoned on having it so soon. There never was a wind blowed," argued Mrs. Tregose, "that was an unmixed evil, and didn't blow somebody good. If this here wind have blowed fourteen horses, and jellies and twenty-five per cent. and the keeper's tips over the Cleave,—it ha' blowed a terra-cotta gown on to my Louisa."

"But," argued the tailor in his strident voice, "supposing, in consequence of the death, that her ladyship and the young lady and the little lord give up living here, and go for education to London or abroad, where will you be, Mrs. Tregose, for their cast gowns? Your Louisa ain't going to wear that terra-cotta for eleven years, I reckon."

"There's something in that," assented the woman, and her mouth fell. "Yes," she said, after a pause for consideration, "who can tell how many beautiful dresses and bonnets and mantles have gone over the Cleave along with the blanc-mange, and the horses and the five-and-twenty per cent.? I'm uncommon sorry now his lordship is dead."

"I've been credibly informed," said the tailor, "that his lordship laid claim to Chillacot, and said that because old Gaffer Saltren squatted there, that did not constitute a title. Does it give a rook a title to a Scotch fir because he builds

a nest on it? Can the rook dispose of the timber? Can it refuse to allow the tree to be cut down and sawn up, for and because he have sat on the top of it? I've an old brood-sow in my sty. Does the sty belong to the sow or to me?"

"Fax is fax," assented the miner.

"And," urged the blacksmith, "if his lordship wanted to get the land back, why not? If I lend my ladder to Farmer Eggins, haven't I a right to reclaim it? His lordship asked for the land back, not because he wanted it for himself, but in the interest of the public, to give us a station nigh at hand, instead of forcing us to walk three and a half or four miles, and sweat terrible on a summer's day. And his lordship intended to run a new road to Chillacot, where the station was to be, and so find work for hands out of employ, and he said it would cost him a thousand pounds. And now, there is the new road and all it would have cost as good as thrown over the Cleave along with his lordship."

"The captain—he did it," shouted the blacksmith.

"Fax speak, they are fax. Skin me alive, if they baint," said the miner.

Giles Inglett Saltren had heard enough. He raised his voice and said, "Mr. Blatchford, and the rest of you—some insinuate, others openly assert that my father has been guilty of an odious crime, that he has had a hand in the death of Lord Lamerton."

He was interrupted by shouts of "He has, he has! We know it!"

"How do you know it? You only suppose it. You have no grounds absolutely, no grounds for basing such a supposition. The coroner, as yourselves admit, refused to listen to the charge."

A voice: "He was afraid of having his shirt-fronts moulded."

"Here, again, you bring an accusation as unfounded as

it is absurd, against an honourable man and a Crown official. If you had been able to produce a particle of evidence against my father, a particle of evidence to show that what you imagine is not as hollow as a dream, the coroner would have hearkened and acted. Are you aware that this bandying of accusations is an indictable offence? My father has not hurt you in any way."

This elicited a chorus of cries.

"He has spoiled my shoeing." "He has prevented the making of the road." "My wife will never have blanc-mange again." And Samuel Ceely, now arrived on the scene, in whispering voice added, "All my beautiful darlings—twelve of them, as healthy as apples, and took their vaccination well—all gone down the Cleave."

It really seemed as if the happiness, the hopes, the prosperity of all Orleigh, had gone over the edge of the cliff with his lordship.

"I repeat it," exclaimed the young man, waxing warm; "I repeat it, my father never did you an injury. You are now charging him with hurting you, because you suffer through his lordship's death, and you are eager to find some one on whom to cast blame. As for any real sorrow and sympathy, you have none; wrapped up in your petty and selfish ends."

A voice: "Fax is fax—he did kill Lord Lamerton."

The tailor: "Human nature is human nature, and nobody can deny he prophesied my lord's death."

"I dare you to charge my father with the crime," cried young Saltren. "I warn you. I have laid by a little money, and I will spend it in prosecuting the man who does."

"We all do. Prosecute the parish," rose in a general shout.

"My father is incapable of the crime."

"We have no quarrel with you, young Jingles," roared a

miner. "Our contention is with the captain. Mates, what do y' say? Shall we pay him a visit?"

"Aye—aye!" from all sides. "Let us show him our minds."

A boisterous voice exclaimed: "We'll serve him out for taking the bread out of our mouths. We'll tumble his house about his ears. He sha'n't stand in our light any more."

And another called, "If you want to prosecute us, we'll provide you with occasion."

Then a stone was flung, which struck Jingles on the head and knocked him down.

For a few minutes the young man was unconscious, or rather confused, he never quite lost his senses. The women clustered about him, and Mrs. Tregose threw water in his face.

He speedily gathered his faculties together, and stood up, rather angry than hurt, to see that nearly all the men had departed. The act of violence, instead of quelling the excitement, had stirred it to greater heat; and the body of men, the miners, labourers, the blacksmith, tailor, and shoemaker, their sons and apprentices, went off in a shouting, gesticulating rabble in the direction of the Cleave, not of Chillacot, but of the down overhanging it.

In a moment the latent savage, suppressed in those orderly men, was awake and asserting itself. Mr. Welsh had spoken the truth when he told Jingles that the destructive passion was to be found in all; it was aroused now. The blacksmith, the tailor, the shoemaker, the labourers, had all in their several ways been working constructively all their life, one to make shoes and harrows, one to shape trousers and waistcoats, one to put together boots, others to build, and plant, and stack, and roof, and now, all at once, an appeal came to the suppressed barbarian in each, the chained madman in the asylum, and the destructive faculty was loose and rioting in its freedom.

Thomasine Kite stood before the young man. "Now, then," she said half mockingly, "if you want to save your mother out of the house before the roof is broke in, you must make haste. Come along with me."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE FLOW OF THE TIDE.

CAPTAIN SALTREN returned at night to sleep at Chillacot, but he wandered during the day in the woods, with his Bible in his pocket or in his hand, now reading how Gideon was raised up to deliver Israel from Midian, and Samson was set apart from his mother's womb to smite the Philistines, then sitting at the edge of the quarry brooding over his thoughts.

He was not able to fix his mind for long on anything, and he found that the Scripture only interested and arrested his attention so far as it touched on analogous trains of ideas. For the first time in his life a chilling sense of doubt, a cold suspicion of error stole over his heart. When this was the case he was for a moment in agony, his nerves tingled, his throat contracted, and a clammy sweat broke out over his face. The fit passed, and he was again confident, and in his confidence strong. He raised his voice and intoned a hymn, then became frightened at the sound, and stopped in the midst of a stanza.

Presently he recalled his wife's deceptions and how his heart had foamed and leaped at the thought of the wrong done her and himself, and how he had nourished a deadly hatred against Lord Lamerton on that account. Now he knew that there had been no occasion for this hatred.

What had he done to his lordship? Had he really with his hand thrust him over the precipice, or had the nobleman fallen in stepping back to avoid the blow. Either way the guilt, if guilt there were, rested on Saltren's head; but the captain would not listen to the ever welling-up suggestion that there was guilt. It was not he who had killed his lordship, it was the hand of God that had slain him, because the hand of human justice had failed to reach him. The captain entertained little or no personal fear—he was ready, if it were the will of heaven, to appear before magistrates and juries; before them he would testify as the apostles had testified. If it were the will of heaven that he should die on the gallows, he was ready to ascend the scaffold, sure of receiving the crown of glory; perhaps the world was not ripe to receive his mission.

When that wave of horror swept over him, no fear of the consequences of his act helped to chill the wave; his only horrible apprehension was lest he should have made a mistake. This it was that lowered his pulsation, turned his lips blue, and made a cloud come between him and the landscape. He fought against the doubt, battled with it as against a temptation of the Evil One, but as often as he overcame it, it returned. The discovery that he had been deceived by Marianne into believing that Lord Lamerton had injured him, was the little rift in his hitherto unbroken all-enveloping faith; but even now he had no doubt about the vision, but only as to its purport. That he had seen and heard all that he professed to have seen and heard—that he believed still, but he feared and quaked with apprehension lest he should have misread his revelation.

It is not easy, rather is it impossible, for a man of education, surrounded as he has been from infancy by ten thousand influences to which the inferior classes are not subjected, to understand the self-delusion of such a man.

The critical, sceptical spirit is developed in this century

among the cultured classes at an early age, and the child of the present day begins with a *Dubito* not with a *Credo*. Where there is no conviction there can be no enthusiasm, for enthusiasm is the flame that dances about the glowing coals of belief ; and where no fire is, there can be no flame. We allow of any amount of professions, but not of conviction. Zeal is as much a mark of bad breeding as a hoarse guffaw.

Enthusiasms are only endurable when affectations, to be put on and put off at pleasure ; to be trifled with, not to be possessed by. This is an age of toleration ; we tolerate everything but what is earnest, and we lavish our adulation on the pretence, not the reality of sincerity. For we know that a genuine enthusiasm is unsuitable for social intercourse ; he who is carried away by it is carried beyond the limits of that toleration which allows a little of everything, but exclusiveness to none. He who harbours a belief is not suffered to obtrude it ; if he be a teetotaller he must hide his blue ribbon ; if a Home Ruler, must joke over his shamrock ; if a Quaker, must dress in colours ; if a Catholic, eat meat on Good Friday. The apostle expressed his desire to be all things to all men ; we have made universal what was then a possibility only to one, we are all things to all men, only sincere neither to ourselves nor to any one. We are like children's penny watches that mark any hour the wearers desire, not chronometers that fix the time for all. How can we be chronometers when we have no main springs, or if we had them, wilfully break them.

We regard all enthusiasms as forms of fever, and quarantine those infected by them ; we watch ourselves against them, we are uneasy when the symptoms appear among our children. At the least quickening of the pulse and kindling of the eye we fly to our medicine chests for a spiritual narcotic or a sceptical lowering draught.

The new method of dealing with fevers is to plunge the

patients in cold water, the reverse of the old method, which was to bring out the heat; and we apply this improved system to our spiritual fevers, to all these mental attacks bred of convictions. We subdue them with the douche and ice, and the wet blanket. When the priests of Baal invoked their god on Mount Carmel, they leaped upon the altar, and cut themselves with knives; but Elijah looked on with a supercilious smile, and invited those who followed him to pour buckets of water over his sacrifice; and with what pity, what contempt we regard all such as are possessed with the divine fury, and are ready to suffer and make themselves ridiculous for their god; how we water our oblations, and make sure that the sticks on our altar are green and incombustible; how, if a little spark appears, or a spiral of smoke arises, we turn on hydrants, and our friends rush to our aid with the buckets, and we do not breathe freely till spark and smoke are subdued.

But then, because altars are erected for burnt sacrifices, and a burnt sacrifice is unsavoury, expensive, and unfashionable, we thrust a little coloured tin-foil in among the wet sticks, and protest how natural, how like real fire it looks, and we prostrate ourselves before it in mock homage.

No dread of enthusiasm, no shrinking from conviction, is found among the uneducated, and the semi-educated. Among them enthusiasm is the token of the divine afflatus, as madness is regarded among savages. They respect it, they bring fuel to feed it, they allow it to burst into extravagance, to riot over reason, and to consume every particle of common sense. The corrective, judicial faculty, the balance wheel is deficient; the strength, not the quality of a conviction gives it its command to the respect and adhesion of the many. If I were to break out of Bedlam with the one fixed idea in me that I had eyes at the ends of my ten toes, wherewith I saw everything that went on in the world, and with my big toes saw what was to be in the future; and if I

went up and down England preaching this and declaring what I saw with my toes, and continued preaching it with the fire of perfect sincerity for a twelvemonth, I would shake the hold of the Established Church on the hearts of the people, and make the work of the Liberation Society easy. Half England would form the Church of the seeing toes, but in that Church I would not number any of the cultured.

As for us, we get over our enthusiasms early, as we cut our teeth, and we lose them as rapidly. Primeval man wore his teeth till he died, so do savages of the present day; but the very milk teeth of our infants decay. We are so familiar with the fact that we assume that all good sets of teeth are false, that if we keep here and there a fang in our jaws, it is carious, and only preserved as a peg to which to wire our sham molars and front teeth. It is so unusual to find any one with a real set, that we look on such a person with suspicion as having in him a stain of barbarous blood.

It is obvious that this defect of real teeth in our jaws has its advantages. It allows us to change our teeth when we find those we have hitherto worn inconvenient or out of fashion.

It is the same with our convictions, we lose them early, all the inside disappears, leaving but the exterior enamel, and that breaks away finally.

But then, we do not open our mouths to our friends and in society, exposing our deficiencies. We replace what is lost by what looks well, and hold them in position by the fragments of early belief that still project; and when these artificial articles prove irksome we change them. This is how it is that, for instance, in politics, a man may profess to-day one thing, and something quite different to-morrow. No one is shocked, every one understands that this exhibition to-day is unreal, and that to-morrow also unreal.

But, together with the advantage afforded by this power

of altering our sets, there is a disadvantage which must not be left unnoticed, which is that the biting and holding power in them is not equal to that possessed by the natural articles.

Patience Kite came upon the captain as he stood in a dream, Bible in hand, but not reading, meditating, and looking far away, yet seeing nothing. She roused him with a hand on his shoulder.

"Do you know what they are about?"

"They! Who?"

"All the parish—the men; the miners out of work, the day-labourers, the tradesmen, all."

Saltren shook his head; he desired to be left alone to his thoughts, his prayers, his Bible reading.

"They are destroying your house," said Patience, shaking him, to rouse him, as she would have shaken a sleeper.

"My house? Chillacot?"

"Yes, they are; they are breaking up the rock on the Cleave, and throwing it down on your roof, and smashing it in."

"My house! Chillacot?" He was still absent in mind. He could not at once withdraw his thoughts from where they had strayed to matters so closely concerning himself.

"It is true; Tamsine came running to me to tell me about it. Your son managed to get into the house and bring his mother out, and Marianne is like one in a fit, she cannot speak—*that*, if you wish it, is a miracle. The men have set picks and crowbars to work to tumble the stones down on your house and garden, and bury them. Slates and windows are smashed already, and the shrubs broken down in your garden."

"My house!—why?"

"Why? Because you won't let the railway come along there. and the parish is angry, and thinks the station will be set further from the village. The fellows say you, with your

obstinacy, are standing in the way of improvement, and driving trade and money out of the place."

Stephen Saltren looked at Mrs. Kite with dazed eyes. He could not receive all she said, but he allowed her to lead him through the woods in the direction of Chillacot. He came out with her at the spot where he had stood before and looked on whilst the body of Lord Lamerton was removed from the place where it had fallen.

He stood there now, and looked again, and saw the destruction of the house he loved. A crowd of men and boys were on the down, shouting, laughing, some working, others encouraging them. Those who had crowbars drove them into the turf, and worked through to the rock that came up close to the surface; then they levered the stones through clefts and faults, out of place, and sent them plunging over the edge of the precipice, accompanied by clouds of dust, and avalanches of rubble. As each piece went leaping and rolling down it was saluted with a cheer, and the men leaned over the edge of the cliff to see where it fell, and what amount of damage was done by it.

The roof of Chillacot was broken through in several places; the slates at the top of the chimney, set on edge to divert the draught from blowing down it, were knocked off. One huge block had overleaped the house, torn a track through the flower-bed in front, had beat down the entrance gate and there halted, seated on the shattered gate.

Saltren stood looking on with apparent indifference, because he was still unable to realise what was being done; but the full importance of the fact that his home was being wrecked came on him with a sudden rush, the blood flew into his face, he uttered a shout of rage, plunged through the bushes, down the hill-side, dashed through the stream below in the valley, ran up to his cottage, and for a moment stood shaking his fist in inarticulate wrath at the men, who looked down on him, laughing and jeering, from the cliff.

He had forgotten everything now except what was before him, and his anger made him blind and speechless. This was his house, built by his father; this his garden, tilled by his own hands. Who had a right to touch his property?

The blacksmith from above shouted to him to stand off, another mass of rock was dislodged and would fall. Saltren could see what menaced. On the piece of rock grew a thorn-tree, and the thorn was swaying against the sky with the exertions of the men, leaning on their levers, snapping the ligatures of root-fibre, and opening the joints in the stone. But Saltren had no fear for himself in his fury at the outrage being done him. Regardless of the warning cries addressed to him, he strode over the broken gate, and entered his partially ruined house.

The blacksmith, alarmed, shouted to the miners engaged on the levers to desist from their work, as Saltren was in the house below; but they replied that the stone was moving, the crack widening between it and the rock, and that to arrest it was now impossible.

The men held their breath, and were for the moment afraid of the consequence of what they had done. But they breathed freely a moment later, as they saw the captain emerge from his house and cross the garden, and take up a place out of the reach of danger. What they did not notice, or disregarded, was that he had brought out his gun with him. Stephen stood where he could command those on the cliff, and levelled and cocked his gun. His strong jaws were set; his dark eyebrows drawn over his flashing eyes; there was not a tremor in his muscles. He watched the swaying thorn; he saw that in another moment it would come down along with the mass of rock on which it stood, and which it grappled with its claw-like roots.

"What are you about, Cap'n?" asked Mrs. Kite, coming up hastily.

He turned his head, smiled bitterly, and touched the barrel of his gun.

"When that rock comes down," he said, "one of those above shall follow it."

At that moment the block parted from the parent rock, and whirled beneath, followed by a train of dust. It struck the corner of the chimney, sent the stones of which it was built flying in all directions, and crashed through the roof, but left the thorn-bush athwart the gap it had torn.

Before Saltren could discharge his gun, Mrs. Kite struck it up, and he fired it into the air.

"You fool!" she said, and then burst into a harsh laugh. "You find fault with others for doing that you approve yourself. You would undermine Orleigh, and object to Chillacot being overthrown."

CHAPTER XL.

THE END OF A DELUSION.

CAPTAIN SALTREN remained motionless, with his gun raised, as it had been struck up by Patience Kite, for several minutes ; then he slowly lowered it, and turned his face to her. The troubled expression which of late had passed over it at intervals returned. The jaw was no longer set, and the red spots of anger had faded from his cheeks. The momentary character of decision his face had assumed was gone, and now the lips trembled feebly.

“What was that you said?” he asked.

Patience laughed, and pointed to the crag.

“See,” she exclaimed, “the gun has frightened the men ; and there comes the policeman with your son over the down !” She laughed again. “How the fellows run ! After all, men are cowards.”

“What was that you said when I was about to fire?” asked the captain again.

“Said ?—why, what is true. You wanted to rattle down his lordship’s house, and killed him because he refused to allow it to be done ; and now you object to having your own shaken down. But there, that is the way of men.”

Saltren remained brooding in thought, with his eyes on the ground, and the end of the gun resting where his eyes fell.

Mrs. Kite taunted him.

"You kill the man who won't let you pull down his house, and you would kill the man who throws down yours. What are you going to do now? Prosecute them for the mischief, and make them patch up again what they have broken? or will you give up the point, and let them have their own way, and the railway to run here, with a station to Chillacot?"

He did not answer. He was considering Mrs. Kite's reproach, not her question. Presently he threw the gun away, and turned from his wrecked house.

"It is true," he said. "Our ways are unequal; it is very true." He put his hand over his face, and passed it before his eyes; his hand was shaking. "I will go back to the Owl's Nest," he said in a low tone.

"What! Leave your house? Do you not want to secure what has not been broken?"

"I do not care about my house. I do not care about anything in it."

"But will you not go and see Marianne—your wife? You do not know where she is, into what place your son took her, and whether she is ill?"

He looked at her with a mazed expression, almost as if he were out of his senses, and said slowly—

"I do not care about her any more." Then, dimly seeing that this calmness needed justification, he added, "I have condemned in others what I allow in myself. I have measured to one in this way, and to myself in that."

He turned away, and went slowly along the brook to the point at which he had crossed it with Patience Kite after the death of Lord Lamerton, when she led him into the covert of the woods. Mrs. Kite accompanied him now.

They ascended the further hillside together, passing through the coppice, and he remained silent, mechanically

thrusting the oak-boughs apart. He seemed to see, to feel nothing, so occupied was he with his own thoughts.

Presently he came out on the open patch where he had stood twice before, once to watch the removal of his victim, next to see the destruction of his house. There now he halted, and brushed his arms down, first the left, then the right with his hands, then passed them over his shoulders as though he were sweeping off him something that clung to and encumbered him.

"They are all gone," said Mrs. Kite, pointing to the headland, "and Jingles is bringing the policeman down to see the mischief that has been done."

Captain Saltren stood and looked across the valley, but not at his house ; he seemed to have forgotten about it, or lost all concern in it ; he looked away from it, higher up, to the spot whence Lord Lamerton had fallen. Mrs. Kite was puzzled at the expression in his face, and at his peculiar manner. She had never thought highly of him, now she supposed he was losing his head. Every now and then he put up his hand over his mouth to conceal the contraction and quivering of the lips ; and once she heard him utter a sound which might have been a laugh, but was more like a sob, not in his throat, but in his breast.

That dread of having been a prey to delusions, which had passed over him before, had gained consistency, and burdened him insupportably. Opposite him was the headland whence he had precipitated Lord Lamerton, and now he asked himself why he had done it. Because he believed his lordship had hurt him in his family relations ? In that he was mistaken. Because his lordship stopped the mine and threw him out of work rather than have his house imperilled ? He himself was as resolute in resisting an attack on his own property, an interference with his own house. Because his lordship had occasioned the death of Arkie Tubb ? Now, as the veils of prejudice fell, one after

another, he saw that no guilt attached to his lordship on that account. The boy had gone in to save Mrs. Kite. It was her fault that he was crushed. She had allowed her daughter, Arkie, all who looked on to believe she was endangered, when she had placed herself in a position of security. The only way in which he could allay the unrest in his mind was to repeat again and again to himself, "It was ordained. The Lord revealed it. There were reasons which I did not know."

There is a moment, we are told by those who have ascended in a balloon, when the cord is cut, and the solid earth is seen to begin to drift below, the trees to dance, and the towers to slide away, that an all-but over-powering sense of fear and inclination comes on one to leap from the car at the risk of being dashed to pieces. It is said that the panic produced by an earthquake exceeds every other terror. When a ship is storm-tossed, escape is possible in a boat, when a house is on fire there are feather-beds into which we can leap; but when the earth is insecure, then we have nowhere to which we can flee, nothing to which we can look.

With Captain Saltren, his religious convictions were what was most stable. Everything else glided before him as a dream, but he kept his feet on those things that belonged to the spiritual world, as if they were adamant foundations. And now he was being, like an aeronaut, caught away, and these shifted under his eyes; like one in an earthquake, he felt the strong bases rock beneath him. The sense of terror that passed over him was akin to despair; but the last cord was not snapped, and that was the firmest of all—his visions and revelations.

"Of all queer folks," said Mrs. Kite, "I reckon you are the queerest, captain. I thought so from the time I first saw you come and pray on your raft in the pond, and when I heard what a tale you had made out of Miss Arminell

throwing a book at you, then I did begin to believe you were not right in your mind ; now I'm sure of it."

Captain Saltren looked dreamily at her ; but in that dreamy look was pain.

"That was, to be sure, a wonderful tale," pursued Mrs. Kite, losing patience with him. "An angel from Heaven cast the Everlasting Gospel down to you, was that it?"

He nodded, but said nothing.

"And I seed Miss Arminell do it."

His eyes opened wide with alarm.

"What the name of the book was, I do not mind ; indeed, I do not know, because I cannot read ; but I have got the book, and can show it you, and you who are a scholar can read it through from the first word to the last."

"You have the book?"

"I have ; when it fell it went under your raft, but it did not sink, it came up after on the other side, and when you were gone I fished it out, and I have it now."

"It was red as blood."

"Aye, and the paint came off on my fingers, but I dried it in the sun ; and I have the book now, not in the Owl's Nest, but in a cupboard of the back kitchen o' my old house."

"His likeness was on it."

"That I can't say. There is a head of a man."

"The head of Lord Lamerton."

"It don't look like it ; the man has black hair and a beard, and his lordship had no beard, and his hair was light brown."

A shudder came over the captain. Was his last, his firmest anchor to break?

Again, as he had done several times already, he passed his hands over his arms and shoulders and sides, as if peeling off what adhered to him.

"Let me see the book," he said faintly. "Lead on."

"I ought to have returned it to Miss Arminell," said Mrs. Kite ; "but I didn't, because my Tamsine saw it, and said she'd like to read it. She's mighty fond of what they call a sensational novel."

"It was the book of the Everlasting Gospel," said Saltren with a burst of desperation. "Nothing will ever make me believe otherwise."

"Or that Miss Arminell, who stood in the mouth of the Owl's Nest, was an angel flying?"

He made no reply, but lowered his head, and pushed forwards.

When they reached the ruined hovel, Mrs. Kite went into that part which had not been dismantled, and brought forth the crimson-covered book from the oven, where it had been hidden, and gave it to her companion.

"It is 'The Gilded Clique,'" was all he said, and fixed his eyes on it with terror in them.

He dared not look Mrs. Kite in the face ; he stood with lowered head before her, and his hands shook as he held the book, so that he could not study it.

"Tell me all that you heard and saw," he said ; then with sudden eagerness, "It was not on the Sabbath?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Kite, "it was on a Sunday that I saw you." Then she told him all the circumstances as they had really happened.

Wondrous are the phantasmagoric pictures conjured up by the sun in the desert ; the traveller looks on and sees blue water, flying sails, palm groves, palaces, and all is so real that he believes he even hears the muezzin's call to prayer from the minarets, and the lap of the water on the sands, and the chant of the mariners in the vessels. Then up springs a cold air, and in a moment the picture is dissolved and exposes arid waste strewn with bones and utterly herbless. And the words of the woman produced some such an effect on the mind of Saltren. In a minute

all the imaginations that had spun themselves out of the little bare fact, and overspread and disguised it, were riven and swept aside.

Captain Saltren stood turning the book about, and looking at the likeness of M. Emile Gaboriau on the cover; it bore not the faintest resemblance to the late Lord Lamer-ton. The book was headed "Gaboriau's Sensational Novels, the Favourite Reading of Prince Bismarck, one shilling." And beneath the medallion was "The Gilded Clique." Sick at heart, with giddy head, Captain Saltren opened the book stained with water, and read, hardly knowing what he did, an advertisement that occupied the fly leaf—an advertisement of "Asiatic Berordnung," for the production of "whiskers, moustaches, and hair, and for the cure of baldness, and the renovation of ladies' scanty partings."

Was this the revelation which had been communicated to him? Was it this which had drawn him on into an ecstasy of fanatical faith, and led him to the commission of an unprovoked crime?

Still half-stunned by his fear he read on. "Eminent authorities have expressed their entire approval of the valuable yet perfectly harmless nature of our discovery. In an age like this, when a youthful appearance is so against a young man, those without beard or moustache being designated boys, and scanty hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes, so unproductive of admiration in the fair sex, the Asiatic Berordnung should be universally adopted. Price 1s. 6d.; full-sized bottles 3s. 6d. each."

Captain Saltren's face was in colour like that of a corpse; he raised his eyes for a moment to Mrs. Kite, and saw the mocking laugh on her lips. He dropped them again, and said in a low voice; "Leave me alone, I cannot think upon what you have said till you are gone."

"I will return to Chillacot and see the ruin," she said.

"The ruin?" he repeated, "the ruin?" He had forgotten about his house, he was looking on a greater ruin than that, the desolation of a broken-down faith, and of prostrate self-confidence.

"Mind you do not risk going to the Owl's Nest," said Mrs. Kite; "you are not in condition for that, your knees scarce support you. Abide here and read your book, and see what comfort you can get out of it; a firm head and a steady foot is needed for that path."

He made a sign to the woman to go; he shook as with the palsy; he put his hand to his head. A band as of iron was tightening about his temples. He could not endure to have Mrs. Kite there any longer. He would go mad unless left alone.

She hesitated for a moment, repeated her injunctions to him to stay where he was till her return, and then left.

He looked after her till she had disappeared, and for some little while after she was gone he looked at the bushes that had closed behind her, fearing lest she should return: then he sank down on a heap of stones, put the book from him with a shudder, and buried his head in his hands.

The mirage was past, the dry and hideous reality remained, but Saltren had not as yet quite recovered from the impression of reality that mirage had produced on his mind. We cannot on waking from certain dreams drive them entirely from us, so that they in no way affect our conduct and influence our opinions. I know that sometimes I wake after having dreamed of some amiable and innocent person in an odious light, and though I fight against the impression all day, I cannot view that person without repugnance. Captain Saltren was aware that he had dreamed, that he had believed in the reality of the mirage conjured up by his fancy, had regarded that crimson-covered book as the revelation of the Everlasting Gospel, and though his mind assented to the fact that he had been deceived, he was un-

able to drive away the glamour of the delusion that clung to him.

I, who write this, know full well that I shall find readers, and encounter critics who will pronounce the case of Captain Saltren impossible; because in the London clubs and in country houses no such delusions are found. What! are we not all engaged in blowing soap-bubbles, in painting mirages, in spinning cobwebs? But then our soap-bubbles, our mirages, our cobwebs, in which we, unlike spiders, entangle ourselves, are not theological, but social and political. Do we not weave out of our own bowels vast webs, and hang them up in the sight of all as substantial realities? And are we not surprised with paralysing amazement when we discover that the bubbles we have blown are not new created worlds, and our cobwebs are dissolved by a touch? I have seen in Innsbruck pictures painted on cobwebs of close texture, with infinite dexterity and patient toil. We not only spin our cobwebs, but paint on them, though I allow we do not picture on them sacred images. Why, my own path is strewn with these gossamer webs of my own weaving that never caught any other midge than my own insignificant self; me they entangled, they choked my wind-pipe, they filled my eyes, they clogged my ears. Look back, critical reader, at your own course, and see if it be not encumbered with such torn and trampled cobwebs. There is a great German book of nine volumes, each of over a thousand pages, and it is entitled "The History of Human Folly." Alas, it is not complete! It gives but the record of the inconceivable follies of a few most salient characters. But in our own towns, in our villages, in our immediate families, what histories of human folly there are unwritten, but well known, I go closer home—in our own lives there is a volume for every year recording our delusions and our inconsequences.

In our Latin grammars we learned "*Nemo omnibus*

horis sapit,' but that may be better rendered, "Quis non omnibus horis delirat?"

The anthropologist and antiquary delight in exploring the kitchen middens of a lost race, heaps of bones, and shells, and broken potsherds rejected by a population that lived in pre-historic times. But, oh, what kitchen middens are about our own selves, at our own doors, of empty shells and dismarrowed bones of old convictions, old superstitions, old conceits, old ambitions, old hopes! Where is the meat? Where the nutriment? Nowhere; gone past recall; only the dead husks, and shells, and bones, and potsherds remain. Open your desk, pull out the secret drawer, and what are revealed? A dry flower—the refuse scrap of an old passion; a worthless voucher of a bad investment; a MS. poem which was refused by every magazine; a mother's Bible, monument of a dead belief. Go, turn over your own kitchen middens, and then come and argue with me that such a delusion as that of Captain Saltren is impossible. I tell you it is paralleled every year.

And now, sitting on the heap of stones, full of doubt, and yet not altogether a prey to despair, Captain Saltren took the red book again, and began to read it, first at the beginning, then turning to the middle, then looking to the end. Then he put it from him once more, and, with the cold sweat streaming over his face, he walked to the edge of the quarry, and there knelt down to pray. Had he been deceived? Was he not now subjected to a fiery trial of his faith—a last assault of the Evil One? This was indeed a possibility, and it was a possibility to which he clung desperately.

A little while ago we saw Giles Saltren humiliated and crushed, passing through the flame of disappointment and disenchantment, the purgatorial flame that in this life tries every man. In that fire the young man's self-esteem and self-reliance had shrivelled up and been reduced

to ash. And now his reputed father entered the same furnace.

He prayed and wrestled in spirit, wringing his hands, and with sweat and tears commingled streaming down his cheeks. He prayed that he might be given a token. He could not, he would not, accept the humiliation. He fought against it with all the powers of his soul and mind.

Then he stood up. He was resolved what to do. He would walk along the ledge of rock to the Owl's Nest, holding the red book in his hand instead of clinging to the ivy bands. If that book stayed him up and sustained him in equilibrium till he reached the Cave, then he would still believe in his mission, and the revelations that attended it. But if he had erred, why then——

Holding the book he began the perilous walk. He took three steps forward, and then the judgment was pronounced.

CHAPTER XLI.

SOCIAL SUICIDE.

WHEN Giles Saltren had left town to return to Orleigh his uncle remained with Arminell. The girl asked Mr. Welsh to leave her for half an hour to collect her thoughts and resolve on what she would do; and he went off to the British-Museum to look at the marbles till he considered she had been allowed sufficient time to decide her course, and then he returned to the inn. She was ready for him, composed, seated on the sofa, pale, and dark under the eyes.

"Well, Miss Inglett," said Welsh, "I've been studying the busts of the Roman Emperors and their wives, and imagining them dressed in our nineteenth-century costume; and, upon my word, I believe they would pass for ordinary English men and women. I believe dress has much to do with the determination of character. Conceive of Domitian in a light, modern summer suit—in that he could not be bloodthirsty and a tyrant. Imagine me in a toga, and you may imagine me committing any monstrosity. Dress does it. How about your affairs? Are you going to Aunt Hermione?"

"To Lady Hermione Woodhead?" corrected Arminell, with a touch of haughtiness. "No."

"Then what will you do? I'll take the liberty of a

chair." He seated himself. "I can't get their busts out of my head—however, go on."

"Mr. Welsh, I wish to state to you exactly what I have done, and let you see how I am circumstanced. I have formed my own opinion as to what I must do, and I shall be glad afterwards to hear what you think of my determination. You have shown me kindness in coming here, and offering your help, and I am not so ungracious as to refuse to accept, to some extent, the help so readily offered."

"I shall be proud, young lady."

"Let me then proceed to tell you how stands the case, and then you will comprehend why I have taken my resolution. I ran away from home with your nephew, moved by a vague romantic dream, which, when I try to recall, partly escapes me, and appears to me now altogether absurd."

"You were not dressed for the part," threw in Welsh. "You could no more be the heroine in modern vest and the now fashionable hat, than I could commit the crimes of Cæsar in this suit."

"In the first place," pursued Arminell, disregarding the interruption, "I was filled with the spirit of unrest and discontent, which made me undervalue everything I had, and crave for and over-estimate everything I had not. With my mind ill at ease, I was ready to catch at whatever chance offered of escape from the vulgar round of daily life, and plunge into a new, heroic, and exciting career. The chance came. Your nephew believed that he was my half-brother."

"Young Jack-an-apes!" intercalated Welsh.

"That he was my dear father's son by a former fictitious marriage with your sister, Mrs. Saltren, I believed, as firmly as your nephew believed it; and I was extremely indignant with my poor father for what I thought was his dishonourable conduct in the matter, and for the hypocrisy of his after life. I thought that, if I ran away with your nephew, I would force him—I mean my lord—to acknowledge the

tie, and so do an act of tardy justice to his son. Then, in the next place, I was filled with exalted ideas of what we ought to do in this world, that we were to be social knights errant, rambling about at our own free will, redressing wrongs, and I despised the sober virtues of my father, and the ordinary social duties, with the execution of which my step-mother filled up her life. I thought that a brilliant career was open to your nephew, and that I might take a share in it, that we would make ourselves names, and effect great things for the social regeneration of the age. It was all nonsense and moonshine. I see that clearly enough now. My wonder is that I did not see it before. But the step has been taken and cannot be recalled. I have broken with my family and with my class, I cannot ask to have links rewelded which I wilfully snapped, to be reinstalled in a place I deliberately vacated. Nemesis has overtaken me, and even the gods bow to Nemesis."

"You are exaggerating," interrupted Welsh; "you have, I admit, acted like a donkey—excuse the expression, no other is as forcible and as true—but I find no such irretrievable mischief done as you suppose. Fortunately the mistake has been corrected at once. If you will go home, or to Lady Woodhead—"

"Lady Hermione Woodhead," corrected Arminell.

"Or to Lady Hermione Woodhead—all will be well. What might have been a catastrophe is averted."

"No," answered Arminell, "all will not be well. Excuse me if I flatly contradict you. There is something else you have not reckoned on, but which I must take into my calculations. I shall never forget what I have done, never forgive myself for having embittered the last moments of my dear father's life, never for having thought unworthily of him, and let him see that he had lost my esteem. If I were to return home, now or later from my aunt's house, I could not shake off the sense of self-reproach, of self-loathing

which I now feel. There is one way, and one way only, in which I can recover my self-respect and peace of mind."

"And that is—?"

"By not going home."

"Well—go to your aunt's."

"I should be there for a month, and after that must return to Orleigh. No—that is not possible. Do you not see that several reasons conspire against my taking that course?"

"Pray let me know them."

"In the first place, it is certain to have leaked out that I ran away from home. My conduct will be talked about and commented on in Orleigh, in the county. It will become part of the scandal published in the society papers, and be read and laughed over by the clerks and shop-girls who take in these papers, whose diet it is. Everywhere, in all classes, the story will be told how the Honourable Arminell Inglett, only daughter of Giles, tenth Baron Lamerton of Orleigh, and his first wife, the Lady Lucy Hele, daughter of the Earl of Anstey, had eloped with the son of a mining captain, the tutor to her half-brother, and how that they were discovered together in a little inn in Bloomsbury."

"No," said Welsh, impatiently. "If you will act as Jingles has suggested, this will never be known. He is back at Orleigh, or will be there this afternoon, and you will be at Portland Place, where your maid will find you. What more natural than that you should return to-morrow home, on account of your father's death? As for the society papers—if they get an inkling of the real facts—I am connected with the press. I can snuff the light out. There are ways and means. Leave that to me."

"But, Mr. Welsh, suppose that suspicion has been roused at Orleigh—Mrs. Cribbage has to be considered. That woman will not leave a stone unturned till she has routed

out everything. I used to say that was why the finger ends were always out of her gloves. I would have to equivocate, and perhaps to lie, when asked point-blank questions which if answered would betray the truth. I would be putting my dear step-mother to the same inconvenience and humiliation."

"Trust her wit and knowledge of the world to evade Mrs. Cribbage."

"But I cannot. I have not the wit."

Mr. Welsh was vexed, he stamped impatiently.

"I can't follow you in this," he said.

"Well, Mr. Welsh, then perhaps you may in what I give you as my next reason. I feel bound morally to take the consequences of my act. When a wretched girl flings herself over London Bridge, perhaps she feels a spasm of regret for the life she is throwing away, as the water closes over her, but she drowns, all the same."

"Not at all, when there are boats put forth to the rescue, and hands extended to haul her in."

"To rescue her for what?—To be brought before a magistrate, and to have her miserable story published in the daily penny papers. Why, Mr. Welsh, her friends regret that her body was not rolled down into the deep sea, or smothered under a bed of 'Thames mud'; that were better than the publication of her infamy."

"What will you have?"

"I have made the plunge; I must go down."

"Not if I can pull you out."

"You cannot pull me out. I made my leap out of my social order. What I have done has been to commit social suicide. There is no recovery for me save at a cost which I refuse to pay. I have heard that those who have been half drowned suffer infinite agonies on the return of vitality. I shrink from these pains. I know what it would be were I fished up and thrown on my own shore again. I would

tingle and smart in every fibre of my consciousness, and cry out to be cast in again. No, Mr. Welsh, through youthful impetuosity and wrongheadedness I have jumped out of my social world, and I must abide by the consequences. As the Honourable Arminell Inglett I have ceased to exist. I die out of the peerage, die out of my order, die out of the recognition, though not the memory, of my relatives. But I live on as plain Miss Inglett, one of the countless members of the great Middle Class."

James Welsh looked at the girl with puzzlement in his face. Spots of flame had come into her pale cheeks, and to the temples, as she spoke, and she moved her slender fingers on her lap in her eagerness to make herself explicit and her difficulties intelligible.

"I don't understand you, Miss Inglett. That is, I do not see what is your intention."

"I mean that I have committed social suicide, and I do not wish to be saved either for my friends' sake or for my own. I ask you kindly to get my death inserted in the *Times* and the other daily papers."

"Your actual death?"

"A statement that on such a day died the Honourable Arminell Inglett, only daughter of the late Lord Lamerton. That will suffice; it proclaims to society that I have ceased to belong to it. Of course my dear step-mother and my aunt and the family solicitors shall know the truth. I have money that comes to me from my mother. A statement of my death in the *Times* will not constitute legal death, but it will suffice to establish my social death."

"You are taking an extraordinary and unwarrantable course."

"Extraordinary it may be, but not unwarranted. I have the justification within, in my conscience. When one has done that which is wrong, one is called to suffer for it, and the conscience is never cleansed and restored without

expiating pains. If I were to return to Orleigh, I would die morally, of that I am sure, because it would be a shirking of the consequences which my foolish act has brought down on me."

"There may be something in that," said Welsh.

"I will write to Lady Lamerton and tell her everything and assure her that my decision is irrevocable. I have caused her so much pain, I have behaved so badly to my father, I have been so ungrateful for all the happy days and pleasant comforts of dear, dear Orleigh"—her eyes filled with tears, and she was unable to finish her sentence.

Mr. Welsh said nothing.

"No," she said, after a pause—"No, Mr. Welsh, I cannot in conscience go home, there to dissemble and lie to Mrs. Cribbage and to neighbours; and never to be able to shake off the sense of self-reproach for not having frankly accepted the results of my own misconduct. Do you know, Mr. Welsh, I was angry with my father because I thought he was evading his retribution?"

Mr. Welsh, usually a talkative man, felt no inclination now to say a word.

"Mr. Welsh," said Arminell, "I ask you to go to Portland Place, call on Lady Hermione Woodhead, she is a practical woman of the world; lay the entire case before her, and see if she does not say, 'Throw her in again, for Heaven's sake, so as to keep the story out of the papers.'"

"And if her ladyship does not say so?"

"She will say it."

"If she does not, but asks me to bring you to her, will you go to Portland Place?"

"No; my resolution is taken."

Welsh stood up and paced the room.

"What the deuce will you do?" he asked. "You are quite a girl, and a pretty girl, and confoundedly inexperienced. You cannot, you must not live alone. My

Tryphœna is a good soul ; it is true that we are without a cook, but if you do not object to rissoles I shall be happy to offer you such hospitality as my house affords. Shepherd's Bush is not the most aristocratic quarter of the town, but Poplar is worse ; it is not near the theatres and the parks, but you're welcome to it. Your idea is startling. I'll go into that *cul-de-sac*, Queen's Square, where runs no cab, no 'bus does rumble, and consider it there."

"Will you see my aunt, Lady Hermione? It will save me writing, and you can explain the circumstances by word better than I can tell them with a pen."

"Bless me! I have a mind to do so." He stopped, went to the window, came back, and said abruptly, "Yes, I will. God bless me! To think that I—I of all men, a raging Democrat, should be hansom to and fro between my Ladies and Honourables."

"You can do what will give you pleasure," said the girl with a faint smile—"with a stroke of the pen convert the Honourable Arminell into plain Miss Inglett."

He did not laugh at the sally. He came in front of her, and stood contemplating her, with his hands behind his back.

"God bless me!" he said, "one can be heroic after all in modern costume. I didn't think it. Well, I will go, but write me a line to ensure her receiving me in the morning."

Arminell did as required.

When she had finished the note and was folding it, she looked up at Welsh, and asked, "Have you read the Hecuba?"

"The Hecuba? Classic? Not even in Bohn's translation."

"Then the saying of Hecuba to Polyxenes will not occur to you: 'I am dead before my death, through my ills.'"

"I will go," he said, and held out his hand. "Give me a shake—it will do me good."

"But, Mr. Welsh, you will return to me?"

"Yes." His mouth and eyes were twitching.

"Deuce take it! an aristocrat can do an heroic thing even with a vest and toupee."

Two hours later the journalist returned.

"Confound these aristocrats," he said, as he entered, hot and puffing. "They live in daily, hourly terror of public opinion. I wouldn't be one of them, existing in such a state of quivering terror, not for anything you could offer me. They are like a man I knew who spent all his energies in fighting against draughts. He put sandbags to the bottom of his doors, stuffed cotton-wool into the crevices of his windows, papered over the joints of his flooring, corked up the keyholes, and yet was always catching catarrh from draughts that came from—no one knows where. What they fear is breath—the breath of public opinion."

"What did my aunt say?" asked Arminell.

"Say? In the most elegant and roundabout way what may be summarized in four words—'Chuck her in again.'"

"I said as much."

"Come, Miss Inglett. I have telegraphed to Tryphoena to do two extra rissoles. We shall pass the stores, and I'll buy a tin of prawns and a bottle of Noyeau jelly. Pack up your traps. The cab is at the door. Sorry to-day is Monday, or you should have had something better than rissoles."

CHAPTER XLII.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.

“HERE we are,” said Mr. Welsh, “The Avenue—the most stylish part of Shepherd’s Bush, as it is of New York. You sit still in the fly whilst I go in and make an explanation to her ladyship. I’ll take that bottle of Noyeau you have been nursing; I have the canister of prawns in my coat-pocket; I am sorry before purchasing it that I forgot to ask you if you preferred Lock Awe salmon. What is your favourite tippie? You will hear from my wife that we have no cook. The last we got became inebriated, and we had to dismiss her. We have been without one for a fortnight. Tryphœna—that is, her ladyship—upon my word I have been so mixed up with aristocrats of late, that I find myself giving a title to every one I meet. What was I saying! Oh! that her ladyship has all the cooking to do now? You sit quiet. No fumbling after your purse; I pay the cabby because I engaged him. We of the Upper Ten, under present depression, do not keep our own carriages and livery servants—we hire as we want.”

Under all Welsh’s rollicking humour lay real kindness of heart. Arminell felt it, and drew towards this man, so unlike any other man with whom she was acquainted, or whom she had met. She knew that he was perfectly reliable, that he would do everything in his power to serve her,

and that a vast store of tenderness and consideration lay veiled under an affectation of boisterousness and burlesque.

How is it that when we do a kindness we endeavour to minimise it? We disguise the fact that what we do costs us something, that it gives us trouble, that it draws down on us irksome responsibilities? It is not that we are ashamed of ourselves for doing kindnesses, that we think it unmanly to be unselfish, but rather that we fear to embarrass the person who receives favours at our hands.

Mr. Welsh had really sacrificed much that day for Arminell. He was to have met an editor and arranged with him for articles for his paper. He had not kept his appointment; that might possibly be resented, and lead to pecuniary loss, to some one else being engaged in his room. Editors are unforgiving. "Yes," said Mr. Welsh that same afternoon, when he found that what he dreaded had occurred, "a Domitian is possible still in our costume, but the tyrants confine their ferocity to aspirants after literary work. They cut off their heads, they put out their eyes, and they disjoint their noses, wholesale."

Presently Welsh put his head to the cab door and said cheerfully, "All right, I've broken it to her ladyship. She don't know all. You are a distant and disowned relative of the noble house of Lamerton. That is what I have told her; and I am your guardian for the time. I have explained. Come in. The maid-of-all-work don't clean herself till the afternoon, and is now in hiding behind the hall door. She spends the morning in accumulating the dirt of the house on her person, when no one is expected to call, and she scrubs it off after lunch." He opened the cab door, and conducted her into the house. "I will lug the slavey out from behind the door," he said, "if you will step into the dining room; and then she and I will get the luggage from the cab. Your room is not yet ready. Go in there." He

opened the door on his left, and ushered Arminell into the little apartment.

"Excuse me if I leave you," he said, "and excuse Mrs. Welsh for a bit. She is rummaging somewhere. We have, as she will tell you presently, no cook. The last——" he made pantomimic signs of putting a bottle to his lips. Then he went out, and for a while there reached Arminell from the narrow front passage, somewhat grandly designated the hall, sounds of the moving of her luggage.

A moment later, and a whispered conversation from outside the door reached her ears.

"It's no use—there are only scraps. How can you suggest rissoles? There is no time for the preparation of delicacies. If we are to have them, it must be for dinner. I did not expect you at noon, much less that you would be bringing a visitor. Your telegram arrived one minute before yourself."

"Not so loud," whispered James Welsh, "or she will hear. You must provide enough to eat, of course. Send out for steak."

"Nonsense, James; it is lunch time already. She must manage with scraps, and them cold scraps are wholesome. What doesn't poison fattens."

"You couldn't, I suppose, have the scraps warmed, or"—somewhat louder, with a flash of inspiration—"or converted into a haricot?"

"How can you talk like this, James? Go on, suggest that they shall be made into a mayonnaise next. To have hot meat means a fire, and there is none to speak of in the kitchen."

"Only dead scraps! My dear Tryphœna, she belongs to a titled family, a long way off and disowned, you understand, but still—there is a title in the family and—scraps!"

"What else will you have, James? Had you been home yesterday for dinner, there would have been joint, roast;

but as you were not, I ate cold meat. Now there are only scraps."

"Perhaps if you were to turn out the Noyeau jelly in a shape, Tryphœna, it would give the lunch a more distinguished look."

"Scraps of cold boiled mutton and Noyeau jelly! No, that won't do. The jelly must be warmed and melted into the shape, and take three hours to cool."

"I wish I had taken her to the Holborn Restaurant," groaned Welsh; "what difficulties encumber domestic arrangements!"

"Without a cook—yes," added his wife.

"Do go in and welcome her," urged Mr. Welsh.

"I cannot in this condition. You know I have no cook, and must attend to everything. The girl has been impudent this morning, and has given me notice."

Whilst this discussion was being carried on, Arminell tried not to listen, but the whispers were pitched so high, and were so articulate, that scarce a word escaped her.

Then Mr. Welsh whispered, "Do lower your voice, Tryphœna," and the pair drifted down the passage to the head of the kitchen steps, and what was further discussed there was inaudible.

Arminell looked round the room. Its most prominent feature was the gas-lamp with double burner and globes—the latter a little smoked, suspended from the ceiling by a telescopic tube that allowed just sufficient gas to escape at the joints to advertise itself as gas, not paraffin or electric fluid. This room was the one in which, apparently, Mrs. Welsh sat when she had a cook, and was not engrossed in domestic affairs. Her work-box, knitting, a railway novel, bills paid and unpaid, and one of Mr. Welsh's stockings with a hole in the heel, showed that she occupied this apartment occasionally.

The door opened, and Mrs. Welsh entered, followed by

her husband. She was a stout lady with a flat face, and a pair of large dark eyes, her only beauty. Her hair was not tidy, nor were all the buttons and hooks in place and performing their proper functions about her body.

"How do you do?" said she, extending her hand; "I'm sorry to say I have no cook; nothing is more difficult than to find cooks with characters now-a-days; ladies will give such false characters. What I say is, tell the truth, whatever comes of it. My last cook had a glowing character from the lady with whom she lived in Belgrave Square. I assure you she was in a superior house, quite aristocratic—carriage people; but I could not keep her. I did not myself find out that she drank. I did not suspect it. I knew she was flighty—but at last she went up a ladder, sixty feet high, and could hardly be got down again. It was in an adjoining builder's yard. The ladder leaned against nothing, it pointed to the sky, and she went up it, and though a stout and elderly woman, looked no bigger than a fly when she had reached the top. Won't you sit down? or stay—let me take you up to the parlour. We will have the table laid directly for lunch. Mr. Welsh does not generally come home at this time of day, so I was unprepared, and I have no cook. The ladder began to sway with her, for she became nervous at the top, and afraid to come down; quite a crowd collected. Do take off your things. Your room will be ready presently. In the meantime you can lay your bonnet in the drawing-room. I am short of hands now. The steps are rather narrow and steep, but I will lead the way. I'll see to having water and soap and a towel taken to the best bed-room presently, but my servant is now making herself neat. None of the police liked to go up the ladder after my cook. The united weights at the top, sixty feet, would have made it sway like a bulrush, and perhaps break. This is the drawing-room. Do make yourself comfortable in it and excuse me. My father and

mother were carriage people. There he is in his uniform, between the windows, taken when he was courting my mother. You will excuse me, or the girl will spread a dirty instead of a clean tablecloth for lunch. Dear me, the blinds have not been drawn up !”

Then Mrs. Welsh departed. All men and women trail shadows behind them when the sun shines in their faces, but some women, in all conditions of the heavens, drag behind them braid. It would seem as if they had their skirts bound to come undone. As in the classic world certain females were described as being with relaxed zones, so are there females in the modern world in a perpetual condition of relaxed bindings. If Mrs. Welsh had lived in a palæozoic period, when the beasts that inhabited the globe impressed their footprints on the pliant ooze, what perplexity her traces would now produce among the palæontologists, and what triumph in the minds of the anthropologists, who would conclude that these were the footprints of the *homo caudatus*, the missing link between the ape and man, and point in evidence to the furrow accompanying the impressions of the feet ; and Mrs. Welsh always did wear a tail, but the tail was of black binding, sometimes looped, sometimes dragging in ends. As Arminell followed Mrs. Welsh up the stairs, she had to keep well in the rear to avoid treading on th's tail.

On reaching the drawing-room, Arminell laid her bonnet and cloak on the sofa, and looked round the room as she had looked about that below. The latter had been dreary to the eyes, the former had the superadded dreariness of pretence.

Houses that are uninhabited are haunted by ghosts, and unoccupied rooms by smells. The carpet, the curtains, the wall-paper, the chintz covers, the cold fire-place, send forth odours urgent to attract attention, as soon as the door opens. They are so seldom seen that they *will* be smelt.

The drawing-room in the Avenue was small, with two narrow windows to it; the walls were papered with an æsthetic dado of bulrushes and water weeds, on a pea-green base; above that ran a pattern picked out with gold, a self-assertive paper. Above the marble mantelshelf was a chimney-piece of looking-glasses and shelves, on which stood several pieces of cheap modern china, mostly Japanese, such as are seen outside Graves in Oxford Street, in baskets, labelled, "Any of this lot for 2d."

Against the wall opposite the windows were two blue Delft plates, hung by wires. Between the windows was the miniature of the father of Mrs. Welsh, once a carriage-man, but not looking it, wearing the uniform of a marine officer, and the languishment of a lover. He was represented with a waxy face, a curl on his brow, and either water or wadding on his chest.

Upon the table were books radiating from a central opal specimen glass that contained three or four dry everlastings, smelling like corduroys; and the books in very bright cloth had their leaves glued together with the gilding.

Unhappy, occupied with her own trouble though Arminell was, yet she noted these things because they were so different from that to which she was accustomed. Perhaps the rawness of the decoration, the strain after impossible effect, struck Arminell more than the lack of taste. She had been accustomed to furniture and domestic decoration pitched in a key below that of the occupants, but here everything was screwed up above that of such as were supposed to use the room. Elsewhere she had seen chairs and sofas to be sat on, carpets to be walked on, books to be read, wall papers to be covered with paintings. Here even the sun was not allowed to touch the carpet, and the chairs were to be made use of gingerly, and the fire-irons not to be employed at all, and the grate most rarely. After Arminell had spent half-an-hour in this parlour, the whole house

reverberated with the boom of a gong ; and next moment Mrs. Welsh came in to say that lunch was ready. She had in the meantime dressed herself to do the honours of the meal ; had changed her gown, then brushed her hair, and put on rings. Nevertheless she lacked finish. The brooch was not fastened, and threatened to fall, and her dress improver had not been accurately and symmetrically fitted to her person.

"Welsh," she said, "has departed. He is very sorry, but business calls must be attended to. Never mind, I'll do what I can to entertain you. I will tell you the end of the story of my cook up a ladder. Ah!" she exclaimed on reaching the foot of the stairs—"is that your umbrella fallen on the floor? You stuck it up against the wall, no doubt. The gong has done it, shaken it down with the vibration."

The lunch was plain, but the good lady had made an effort to give it the semblance of elegance. She had sent out for parsley to garnish the cold mutton, and for a dish of lettuce and another of watercress, and had set a just uncorked bottle of Castle A Claret on the table beside Arminell's plate.

"You'll excuse if we help ourselves and dispense with the girl," said Mrs. Welsh. "Have you had much to do with servants? I have applied to the registry offices for a cook and can't get one ; they object to Shepherd's Bush, or else want to redeem their characters at my expense. I have applied at the hospital for a convalescent, but if I get one, she will not be up to much work, and besides will have been so pampered in hospital, that she will not accommodate herself to our fare, and will leave as soon as she is well. If we were carriage people, it would be different. Servants won't remain in a situation where a carriage and pair are not kept. They think it immoral. Were your parents carriage people? And did your mother

have much trouble with her servants? And, if I may ask, where did she go for her cooks?"

"My mother died shortly after my birth, and my father recently." Arminell spoke with a choke in her voice. "I have not had time to get mourning. I must do some shopping this afternoon."

"I can show you where you can get things very cheap. You take a 'bus along Goldhawk Road, it costs but twopence if you walk as far as Shepherd's Bush Station, otherwise it comes to threepence. I suppose you have kept home for your father? Did you meet with impertinence from the servants? But I dare say you kept your carriage. If you don't do that they regard you as their equals. They divide mankind into castes—the lowest keep no conveyances, the middle have one-horse traps, and the superior and highest of all keep a pair and close carriage. My parents were carriage people—indeed my father was an officer in her Majesty's service. My husband will some day, I trust, have his equipage. His sister is very intimate with people of distinction. I don't mean carriage people only, but titled persons, the highest nobility. She was a bosom friend of the dowager Lady Lamerton, she told me so herself. I almost expect the Lamerton family to call on me. Should they do so whilst you are here, I shall be happy to introduce you. By the way—your name is Inglett, you must be a distant connexion of the family. James said you were related to a noble family, but that they did not receive you. In the event of a call, perhaps you would prefer to remain in the dining-room. My husband's nephew is called after his lordship, Giles Inglett, because my lord stood godfather to him at the font. I assure you the intimacy between Marianne and the family is most cordial. I wonder what Mrs. Tomkins over the way will say when their carriage stops at my gate! What a pity it is that the British nobility should be the hot-bed of vice."

"Is it?" asked Arminell listlessly.

"Indeed it is. I know a great deal about the aristocracy. My sister-in-law moves in the highest circles. I read all the divorce cases in high life, and I have an intimate friend who is much in great houses—in fact, she nurses there. Persons of good family when reduced in circumstances become trained nurses. This lady has nursed Sir Lionel Trumpington, and I could tell you a thing or two about his family she has confided to me—but you are not married. She had the charge of chief Justice Bacon's daughter, who was a dipsomaniac, and so had the *entrée* into the best families, and has told me the most extraordinary and shocking stories about them."

After lunch, Mrs. Welsh said, "There now, go up to the parlour, and sit there an hour, till I am ready. I must see that the girl does your room, after which I will put on my walking clothes. I will take you where you can get crape, just a little crumpled and off colour, at half price. We will walk to the railway arch and so save a penny."

Arminell sat by herself in the drawing-room; the sun was streaming in, but Mrs. Welsh allowed the blinds to remain undrawn. She stood hesitatingly with hand raised to draw them, but went away, leaving them rolled up, a concession to the presence of a visitor.

Arminell's mind turned from her own troubles to the consideration of the life Mrs. Welsh and those of her social grade led. How utterly uninteresting, commonplace, aimless it seemed; how made up of small pretences, absurd vanities, petty weaknesses, and considerable follies! A few days ago, such a revelation of sordid middle-class triviality would have amused her. Now it did not. She saw something beside all the littleness and affectation, something which dignified it.

Everywhere in life is to be observed a straining after what is above; and the wretched drunken cook scrambling up a ladder that led to nothing, blindly exemplified the universal tendency. As among the plants in a garden, and the trees

of a plantation, there is manifest an upward struggle, so is it in the gardens and plantations of humanity. The servant, as Mrs. Welsh had said, is not content to serve where no servant is kept, and changes to a situation where there is a pony-chaise; then feels a yearning in her that fills her with unrest till she has got into a sphere where there is a one-horse brougham, and deserts that again for the house that maintains a landau and pair. In the lower class an effort is made to emulate the citizens of the middle class, in dress and arrangement of hair, and mode of speech; and in the middle class is apparent protracted effort to reach the higher; or if it cannot be reached, to hang on to it by a miniature and a sister-in-law, and a trained nurse friend. Is this ridiculous? Of course it is ridiculous to see cooks scrambling up ladders that reach nowhere, but it is infinitely better that they should do this than throw themselves into the gutter. And so thought Arminell now. Mrs. Welsh may have been absurd, but behind all her nonsense beat a true and generous heart, full of aspiration after something better, and a cheerful spirit of hospitality and self-sacrifice. No. Arminell saw the struggle in the woman's face about the blinds, and respected her. But when she was gone, the girl stood up, went to the windows and drew down the blinds, to save from fading Mrs. Welsh's new gaudy carpet.

CHAPTER XLIII.

DOWSING.

A FEW days later, towards evening, Mr. James Welsh arrived, after having been absent from home. He had not told his wife or Arminell the cause of his departure, nor whither he was going. When he returned, he informed Arminell that he had been away on business, and that he wanted a word with her in the parlour.

"There is no gas in the drawing-room. Will you have a lamp?" asked Mrs. Welsh.

"Thank you. It will be unnecessary. At this time of the year it is not dark, and the dusk is agreeable for a *tête-à-tête*. My business does not need reference to papers."

"Then I will go down and see about locking up the remains of the plum-pudding. The girl has had her share set apart on a plate, and I object to her consuming everything that goes out from dinner. There is enough of the pudding left to serve up fried to-morrow."

Arminell and Mr. Welsh mounted the steep stairs to the sitting-room. The parlour was close and stuffy; Welsh went to the window and opened it a little way.

"Do sit down, Miss Inglett," he said, "there, on the sofa, with your back to the window, if you are not afraid of a breath of air. This twilight is restful to the eyes and grateful to the overwrought brain. There is no need for candles." He seated himself away from her, looking in another

direction, and said, "I suppose you can guess where I have been?"

"Indeed I cannot, Mr. Welsh."

"I have been at Orleigh. I thought I would like to be present at your father's funeral. Besides, I belong to the press, and my duties took me there. Also, my sister is left a widow. You may not, perhaps, have heard of the death of Captain Saltren?"

"Captain Saltren dead!"

"Yes, drowned in the old quarry pit."

"I remember having once seen him there. He was a strange man. He went there to say his prayers, and he prayed on a kind of raft of his own construction. I suppose it gave way under him, or he overbalanced himself."

"Possibly. How he fell is not known. He was very strange in his manner of late, so that the general opinion is that he was off his head. He had visions, or fancied that he had."

Arminell said no more on this matter. She was desirous of hearing about her father's funeral.

"I was present when Lord Lamerton was taken to his last rest," said Welsh; "you cannot have any conception what an amount of feeling was elicited by his death. By me it was unexpected. I could not have supposed that the people, as distinguished from the aristocracy, would have been other than coldly respectful, but his lordship must have been greatly beloved." Welsh paused and rubbed his chin. "Yes, much loved. Of course, I had only seen one side of him, and that was the side I cared to see, being a professional man, and professionally engaged to see only one side. That is in the way of business, and just as a timber merchant measures a tree, and estimates it by the amount of plank it will make, regardless of its effect in the landscape, so it is with me. I look on a man, especially a nobleman, from a commercial point of view, and ask how many feet of type I

can get out of him. I don't consider him for any other qualities he may have than those which serve my object. But I will admit that there must have been a large amount of kindness and sterling worth in his lordship, or there would not have been such a demonstration at his funeral, and that not by a party, but general--not cooked, but spontaneous. One expected to see the quality at the funeral, but what surprised me was the real sorrow expressed by the people. Why, bless you! what do you think? Because Captain Saltren had denounced his lordship, and prophesied his death, the mob rolled stones down the cliff on Chillacot and ruined the house and spoiled the garden."

Pope Leo X. was inaccessible except to buffoons, and when a priest desired an interview with his Holiness, but was unable to obtain one in the ordinary manner, he dressed himself in motley, and as a clown obtained immediate admission.

There are some people who suppose that every one else has the peculiarities of Leo X., and who never approach their fellows, even when they have to speak on matters of serious import, without putting on cap and bells. They labour under the conviction that "the motley," as Jaques said to the Duke, "is the only wear," especially when most inappropriate to the matter of discourse.

Mr. Welsh was desirous of doing what was kind, of conveying to Arminell what he knew was to her painful information, describing to her scenes which must stir her emotions, but he could not assume a sympathetic and serious tone. He was possessed by that perverse spirit which forces a man to garnish his story, however tragic, with quirks and scraps of illustration incongruous and out of taste. He was at heart full of pity for Arminell; he had not gone to Orleigh on journalistic ends, though not averse to paying his travelling expenses by turning what he had seen into type, but he had gone for the girl's sake, and only learned the death of his

brother-in-law on reaching Orleigh. He knew that she hungered for information which she could not receive through the channels formerly open to her. As he spoke to her, his heart swelled, and he had some difficulty in controlling his emotion. Nevertheless, he assumed a tone of half banter, that galled his own sense of propriety as much as it jarred on Arminell. And this masquerade was assumed by him as much to disguise his real self from himself as from the girl. Verily, in our horror of hypocrisy, we are arrant hypocrites. Essayists and satirists have united to wage a crusade against cant, and have succeeded so completely that we dread the semblance of piety, kindliness, sweetness, lest they be taken as an assumption only. In the reaction against false appearances of goodness we have run into the opposite extreme, and put on a false appearance of roughness, hardness, and cynicism. Lest we should be taken to be apricots, with sweet outside and hard interior, we affect to be walnuts, rugged and bitter. A woman poses to herself in the glass, and adorns herself with jewelry to give pleasure first to herself and then to others; but men cock their hats, smut their noses, make grimaces in the glass, and having sneered at their own buffoon appearance, pass off the same pranks on their acquaintance. They will neither allow to themselves nor to others that they acknowledge a serious interest in the drama of life, that they have respect for what is noble, pity for what is suffering, reverence for what is holy. They affect to cast burlesque into all relations of life, as salt is put into all dishes, to make them palatable.

Arminell was not deceived by the manner of James Welsh; under the affectation of selfishness and callousness she recognised the presence of generous sympathy, just as she had seen the same quality under the chatter and pretence of the wife.

At the beginning of this story we saw Arminell present at

what we called the grand transformation scene in the pantomime of life ; now she had reached another, and that a more startling, thorough-going transformation scene. She saw the world and the performers therein differently from the way in which she had seen them before, the world in a real light, the performers in undress. She had got behind the scenes, and into the green-room. Delusion was no longer possible ; she saw the framework of the scenery, the contrivances for the production of effects, and the actors oiling their faces with cotton-wool to remove the paint.

In former times there existed in England a profession which has become extinct—the profession of dowsing. A dowser was a man who laid claim to the peculiar gift of discernment of metal and of water. He was employed to discover mines and springs. He took in his hands a forked hazel rod, holding in each hand one of the branches. When he walked over a hidden vein of metal, or a subterranean artery of water, the rod revolved in his hands, and pointed downwards, and wherever it pointed, there he ordered the sinking of a shaft or well.

But, although dowsing after minerals and fountains has ceased to be practised, we still have among us moral dowsers, and it is even possible for us to become adepts at dowsing ourselves.

The old dowsers insisted that their profession was not an art but an inherent faculty. The dowser was born, not made. But in moral dowsing this is not the case. The faculty can most certainly be acquired, but only on one condition, that we begin with dowsing our own selves. *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili.* Unconsciously, Arminell had been invested with this power ; it had come on her at once, on that morning when her folly, her error, had been revealed to her consciousness. From that memorable moment, when she came to know herself as she really was, not as she had fancied herself to be, the manner in which

she viewed other natures with which she was brought in contact was radically changed. She found herself no longer as heretofore occupied with the outer surface, its ups and downs, its fertility or its barrenness, the invisible rod turned in her hands and revealed to her the hidden veins of ore and motive currents. She saw the silver thread deep below the most unpromising surface, the limpid spring under the most rugged exterior.

As she overlooked the superficial flaws in Mr. and Mrs. Welsh because she recognised their substantial goodness, so did she begin now to perceive what had before been unnoticed in the characters of her father and step-mother. She had had eyes previously only for their foibles and infirmities, now she saw how full of sterling qualities both had been, of punctual fulfilment of duties, of conscientious discharge of the obligations imposed on them by their position and wealth, of hearty good-will for all with whom they were brought in contact. She had disregarded her little half-brother, the present Baron Lamerton, because he was only a child with childish thoughts, childish pursuits, and childish prattle ; and now she saw that his was a very tender, loving spirit, which it would have been worth her while to cultivate. In the first moment of disappointment, humiliation and anger, she had been incensed against Jingles for having assisted her in perpetrating her great mistake. She saw what a fool he had been, how conceited, how ungrateful, but even over this forbidding soil the divining rod turned, and revealed a vein of noble metal. If it had not been there, he would not have accepted his humiliation with frankness and have shown so decided a moral rebound.

When one who has the dowsing faculty is in the society of those who lack it, and listens to their talk, their disparagement of others, the captiousness with which they pick at trivial blemishes, sneer at infirmities, blame short-comings, that person listens with a sort of wonder at the blindness of

the talkers, at their lack of perception, because their eyes never penetrate below the surface, and a sort of pity that they have never turned it inwards and searched themselves, not for silver but for dross.

The knight Huldbrand, when riding through the Enchanted Wood, had his eyes opened, and beneath the turf and the roots of the trees, he looked through, as it were, a sheet of green glass, and saw the gold and silver veins in the earth, and the spirits that worked at, and directed their courses, opening sluices here and stopping currents there. So it is with those invested with the dowsing gift—with them in the Enchanted Wood of Life.

In the twilight room Arminell listened to Mr. Welsh's story of the funeral of her father, with tears running down her cheeks, regardless of the manner in which the story was told, in the intensity of her interest in the matter, and conscious of the intention of the narrator.

The death of Lord Lamerton had indeed evoked an amount of feeling and regret that showed how deeply rooted was the estimation in which his good qualities were held, and how unreal was the agitation that had been provoked against him.

The county papers of all political complexions gave laudatory notices of the late nobleman. Every one who had come within range of his influence had good words to say of him, and lamented his loss as that of a relative. Selfish interest undoubtedly mixed with the general regret. The sportsmen feared that the subscription to the foxhounds would not be maintained on the same liberal scale; the parsons, that on the occurrence of a vacancy in the Lamer-ton patronage, their claims would be overlooked by the trustees; the medical men regretted that the death had been too sudden to advantage them professionally; the benevolent societies feared that the park would not be thrown open to them with the same liberality; the young

ladies that there would be no ball at Orleigh next winter ; the toppers that they would not taste again the contents of a famous cellar ; the tradesmen that money would not be spent in the little country town ; the artisans that work would be abandoned and hands discharged. Of course there was self-interest in the minds of those who lamented the loss of Lord Lamerton, regret was not unmingled with selfish feeling ; but, then, what motives, what emotions are unmixed ? The coin of the realm is not pure, it consists of metal and alloy ; and the feelings that pass current among men are not less adulterated. But are they the less estimable on that account ? Would they pass if unmixed ? Would they be as poignant if pure ? Why, the very prayers in which we address Heaven have their stiffening of self-concern, and it is this that gives them their force. Are they less acceptable above on that account ?

Popular feeling was doubly stirred, and sympathy for the family greatly deepened by the news of the almost simultaneous death of Miss Arminell Inglett. The notice of her death had appeared first in the *Times*, and then in all the papers ; but the circumstances were only imperfectly known. It was rumoured that the shock of the news of her father's death had affected her fatally—her heart having always been weak—whilst in London, staying with her aunt. Such an account had appeared in one of the society papers, and perhaps Mr. Welsh could give the best explanation of how it came there. This was reported at Orleigh. Others said she had died at the second family place in Northamptonshire ; all agreed that she had been buried there beside her mother. Strange rumours had circulated about Miss Inglett, but they had been traced to Mrs. Cribbage, and every one knew that the tongue of that lady, like that of an ox, must be taken with salt. Consequently the rumours died away, and were wholly discredited.

And it was true that Arminell Inglett was dead. That is

to say, the old self-opinionated, supercilious, self-willed Arminell was no more.

In spring the new buds are sheathed in hard husks. One warm morning after a shower they thrust aside these horny sheaths, and the tender foliage appears. It was so with Arminell. She had hitherto worn her better part, the generous qualities of her soul, in a hard and ungracious shell ; now this shell had fallen off, and they broke forth, ready to expand and clothe her with a new and unexpected beauty.

CHAPTER XLIV.

FRAMING.

MR. JAMES WELSH did all that was requisite for the arrangement of Arminell's money-matters. She was entitled to her mother's dower, sufficient to maintain her in easy circumstances. The settlement of her affairs with the trustees, guardians, and the solicitors of the family was a delicate transaction; Arminell authorised Welsh to act for her, and he managed with adroitness and tact, without grudging time or trouble. Meanwhile she remained an inmate of his villa in the Avenue, Shepherd's Bush. She did not wish to be hasty in securing a house for herself and engaging a companion. She would not, however, encroach on the hospitality of the Welshes, and she insisted on becoming their lodger, paying them a moderate weekly sum for her board. They were not rich, their circumstances somewhat strait; it was an object with Mrs. Welsh to save the penny on the 'bus by walking to the railway arch, and though, in their exuberant hospitality, they would have cheerfully kept her as their guest, and treated her to the best they could afford, she insisted on their accepting her on her own terms, not on theirs.

Only by degrees did she realise to the full extent what her social suicide implied. It was not possible for her to estimate its cost till she had committed the irrevocable act

which severed her from the world to which she had belonged ; as impossible, or almost as impossible, as it is for the girl who jumps off London Bridge to conceive of the altered relations and strangeness of the region into which she will pass through the mud and water of the Thames.

I know that nothing surprised me more as a child than being told that water was composed of an infinite number of globules arranged like pebbles in a bag ; but the stream of social life, which looks equally simple and elemental, is in reality made not only of the little component globules of individual life, but of a thousand other circles enclosing these globules, all distinct, self-contained, and rotating on their own axes and taking their own courses. Each of these circles has its special interests, its special tittle-tattle, its special spites, and its special ambitions. There are circles of all sorts, professional, and social, and intellectual, and those who pass from one to another have to undergo mental adjustment before they can understand the language and partake in the momentum of these spheres. Such is the parsonic circle, such the sporting circle, such the circle of politicians, such the legal circle. Let a hunter pitch his rider in pink over a hedge into a ditchful of picnicing clergy and their wives and daughters, and he will be as unable to talk with them as they to entertain him. Let Mrs. Brown drop through the ceiling into an officers' mess, and she will not have a thought, a taste, a word in common. Suffer an archbishop to rise through a trap into the green-room of the ballet girls, and what would they have in common ? The gods live on Olympus, mortals on the plain, and the demons in Tartarus, and all roll on together in one current. Dante divides heaven into constellations, and purgatory into mansions—all the blessed are separated by leagues of ether, and all the lost by adamantine walls. They do not associate, the former enjoy themselves by themselves in their cold planets and groups of stars, and the latter stop in their

several torments by themselves. Their several virtues and several vices classify them and separate them from their fellows. It is not otherwise in this world. We are all boxed off from each other, and very uncomfortable when we step out of our proper box into another.

Arminell felt keenly the solitude of her condition, and it weighed on her spirits. It was not possible for her at once to accommodate herself to her new surroundings. She had Mrs. Welsh to talk, or rather to listen to, but Mrs. Welsh had no other subjects of conversation than the iniquities of servants and the scandals in high life. According to Mrs. Welsh, there was but one social circle in which reigned virtue, and that was the circle of the middle class to which she belonged. Servants as beneath that were bad, that her daily experience taught her, and the upper ten thousand, as she knew by the voice of gossip and the revelations of the press, were also corrupt. It is conceivable that one may tire of hearing only two subjects discussed, even though these subjects be of engrossing interest; and Arminell was fatigued with the relation of the misdeeds of domestics, and the disorders of the nobility. Shylock said to Antonio that he would talk with him, buy with him, sell with him, but would not eat with him. Arminell could do everything with Mrs. Welsh except think with her. The girl felt her friendless condition. She had no companion of her own age, class, and sex, to whom she could open her mind and of whom ask counsel. She could have no more communication with those in the upper world to which she had belonged, and which shared her intellectual and moral culture, than can a fish have communication with the bird. It looks up and sees the beautiful creatures skimming the surface of its element, sees their feet moving in it, their beaks dipped below it, but the birds do not belong to the aqueous element, nor the fish to the atmosphere, and they must live apart accordingly. The bird can pull out a fish and gobble it,

and the fish can bite the toes of the swimming duck, and that is the limit of their association.

I have heard of the case of a lady who was either struck by lightning or so paralyzed by electricity that she lay as one dead, bereft of power of motion. She neither breathed nor did her pulse beat, she could not move a muscle or articulate a sound. She was pronounced to be dead, and was measured, shrouded, and put into her coffin. But though apparently dead, she could hear all that went on in the room, the blinds being drawn down, the number of feet and inches determined for her shell, the sobbing of her mother, and the tramp of those who brought in her coffin. She heard the undertaker ask her father on the day of the funeral, whether he should at once screw her down—then, by a supreme effort, she succeeded in flickering an eyelid, and her father saw the movement and sent for a surgeon.

Arminell was dead—dead to her relations, to her friends, and to her acquaintance. They discussed her, and she was unable to defend herself. They wept over her, and she could not dry their tears. She was incapacitated by her own act from giving a token of life. She was separated from every one with whom for eighteen years she had associated, cut off from every interest which for all these years had occupied her mind, severed from that stream of intellectual life in which she had moved.

She would not quiver an eye in entreaty to be taken out of her shell, she had deliberately gone into that chest, and to it she must henceforth contract her interests and accommodate her habits. When we die we carry away nothing with us of our treasure, but we have our friends and relatives to associate with in the world of spirits; Arminell, by her social death, had carried away with her her patrimony, but that was all. She must make new acquaintances, and acquire fresh friends.

If there be any truth in the doctrine of the transmigration

of spirits, then the souls after death enter into new existences as dogs, oxen, elephants, cockatoos, or earth-worms. If so—the dog that fawns on us with such speaking eyes may be the wife we still lament; and when we cut a worm in two with our spade, we may be slicing in half our little lost babe; and the beef of the ox served at our table may have been worn by the wandering spirit of our most intimate friend.

There are two considerations which make me most reluctant to accept the doctrine of transmigration—the one is that when we leave our human frames and enter into those of dog or slug, what wretchedness it will be for us to adapt our minds and feelings to doggish or sluggish limits. And the other is that the distress must be insupportable to associate with those with whom we have lived without the power of communicating with them.

Now Arminell had transmigrated from the aristocratic order of beings into the middle class order of beings, and she had to accommodate her mind to the ways of this lower grade; and although sitting on a bench in Hyde Park, she might see those she had known, talked to, loved, pass in Rotten Row, she could no more communicate with them than can those who have migrated into dog, and cockatoo, and slug, communicate with us.

In course of time, no doubt, she would find congenial spirits, get to know and love nice girls in this new circle in which she found herself, but that would take time. In course of time, no doubt, she would find her place in this new order of life, be caught by its drift, and drive forward with it. When we are in a railway carriage and cast something from the window, that object is carried on by the momentum of the train, and does not drop perpendicularly to the ground. So Arminell in falling from her class was still for a while sensible of its impulses, but this would cease in time.

There are cases known to science, in which a person has fallen into a condition of mental blank, has forgotten everything acquired, and all acquaintances, and has to begin from the beginning again, to learn to know the relations and to acquire speech and every accomplishment. Now such a case was not that of Arminell, for she remembered all her past, nevertheless she had in this new condition to accept as lost a vast amount of what she had acquired in eighteen years, and begin to accumulate afresh.

Now—she was solitary. It had not occurred to her in her former life that solitude could be oppressive. Then she had counted it as an escape from the whirl of social intercourse. Then she had resented advice, and undervalued sympathy ; but now, when she was deprived of these things, she felt the loss of them. The wife transmigrated into a dog may snap and bark, but cannot otherwise express her heartache, and reproach her husband when preparing for his second wife ; nor can the worm plead and look at us out of our child's blue eyes and tell us it is our own little one translated, when we lift the spade over it. So must Arminell remain silent and unrecognised before all those who had loved her and known her in her first existence.

The life she led in the Avenue, Shepherd's Bush, was so unlike what she had been accustomed to that it was not possible for her to fit herself to it all at once. But Arminell had good sense, and a brave spirit. She did not waste her energies on vain repining. She did not recoil from and disparage that life into which she had entered. She accepted it, as she had accepted the revelation of her folly.

There is a serviceable Yorkshire word, descriptive of accommodation to circumstances, which is worthy of being rescued from a provincialism and of elevation into general acceptance, and that word is—to frame.

A raw country girl is taken into a household as servant.

If she shows token of adaptability to the situation, teachableness, and willingness, she is said to frame.

A clerk settles into an office, is quick in acquiring the technicalities of the business, is interested in his work, obliging as to extension of hours under pressure, and he is said by his employers to frame.

A newly-married couple, if they make allowances for each other's weaknesses, are not self-willed and unyielding, if ready to make the best of all circumstances, are said also to frame.

The frame is the situation, and it may be of all kinds, plain or rich, narrow or wide ; it may be gilt and burnished, or of rude cross-pieces of oak. Into this frame the new life, like a picture, has to be fitted, so much of margin has to be shorn off, or so much of mount has to be added. The frame will not accommodate itself to the picture, the picture must be adapted to the frame.

Arminell was in the process of framing, and the frame was one of her own selection. Whether suitable or not, the situation could not be adapted to her, she must adapt herself to it ; she must cut away here, and piece on there to fit it. The reader shall be shown some instances of the way in which Arminell progressed with her framing.

In the first place, the girl had been accustomed all her life to having a lady's-maid in attendance on her, and putting to rights everything she left in disorder. When she changed her dress, she had been accustomed to throw her clothes about just where she had taken them off ; she had not put her gloves away, tidied her dressing-table, arranged her dresses in the drawers. When, at first, she came to the Avenue, she did as she had been wont, and was unable to understand the hints thrown out by her hostess that the maid had too much of household work to do to be able to act as lady's-maid as well. Then Arminell discovered that it engaged Mrs. Welsh half-an-hour in the morning, another

half-hour in the afternoon, and a third in the evening, to arrange her clothes and room. And as she was aware that Mrs. Welsh had no cook, and had to superintend the cooking herself, this imposed on her hostess an extra and arduous task. Mrs. Welsh expected before long to be a mother, and to accumulate work on the good woman at such a time was unjustifiable.

Accordingly Arminell began to put her room to rights herself, learned how to fold her gowns, and liked to arrange her boots tidily under the dressing-table, and put her towels straight on the horse, and the comb on the brush. After a week she found that the trouble she gave herself was very slight, and that it afforded her real pleasure to be her own lady's-maid.

That was one item in the framing.

Mrs. Welsh had not much plate. Arminell was not particular about what she ate, but she was accustomed to silver and glass, kept very bright, and to unchipped and pretty china. The plate of the Welsh establishment was electro-plate, and the plating was somewhat abraded. The forks and spoons were scratched, not polished. If an egg had been eaten at breakfast, it was not impossible to identify at dinner the spoon that had been used for the egg. Even Castle E claret was not attractive when the bowl of the wine-glass bore on it the impress of a thumb.

One day Arminell said to Mrs. Welsh, "I am sure that the girl is overworked. Shall I give a final burnish to the silver and glass before they come on table?" and Mrs. Welsh had joyfully assented. So Arminell began to take a pride and find a pleasure in being butler in the house of Welsh.

That was another item in the framing.

One day Mrs. Welsh threw out mysterious hints about the anticipated addition to the family, and lamented that, owing to her being without a cook, she had been unable to

provide the many articles of clothing which a new-comer into the world expects and exacts, to wit:—six long night-dresses, half-a-dozen flannels, six shirts, the same number of little socks, bibs to the number of one dozen, besides other articles which for brevity we will include under an &c. What would little Welsh do without his trousseau?

Then Arminell went out and bought linen and flannel, and horrocks, and began to cut out and sew, and mark, and then hold up the little garments and laugh and dance round them, and find a pleasure and pride in being a sempstress.

That was another item in the framing.

In a couple of weeks, Mrs. Welsh was unable to further superintend the cooking. The heat of the kitchen made her faint, and the girl, when left to her own devices, devised startling effects, quite Wagnerian, Doréish.

Then Arminell began diligently to study "Mrs. Warne's Cookery Book," and descend to the subareal world and direct the proportions of condiments, the rolling of pastry, the mincing of veal, and the stuffing of geese. Mrs. Welsh had had a limited culinary horizon—beef olives, rissoles, haricot, were the changes on joint, and the puddings were ground rice mould, "shape" Mrs. Welsh called it, rice milk and apple-tart. Arminell extended the range, and was pleased to surprise and delight Mr. Welsh when he returned fagged in the evening, with a dinner that was a pleasure to eat. In a word she found a gratification and pride in being cook.

That was another item in the framing.

Later, a little Welsh appeared on the scene, and the monthly nurse appeared simultaneously. It really seemed as if Mrs. Welsh had been brought to bed of two babies, for the nurse was as helpless as the infant. She could, or would, neither dust the patient's room, nor lay a fire, nor put a match to the fire when laid for her. She was incapable of carrying upstairs a cup of tea or bowl of gruel. It

was hard to say which of the two babes was the most incapable, exacting, fractious, and insatiable. The maid-of-all-work lost what little head she had, and her temper went along with her head. When, finally, it became clear that the corpulent, middle-aged baby drank something stronger than milk, Arminell asked to have her dismissed, and undertook to attend to Mrs. Welsh and the baby for the remaining fortnight.

Thus Arminell fell into the position of a nurse.

That was another item in the framing.

But there were other adjustments went to the framing. Arminell's superciliousness, her pride of intellect, her self-will, required much paring down. Formerly she had treated what was common-place and humdrum with contempt as beneath the regard of one gifted with intelligence. Now she began to acknowledge that it was in the fulfilment of humdrum duties, and in the accomplishment of common-place obligations that the dignity and heroism of life lay.

Arminell had been accustomed to criticise severely those with whom she associated, and to laugh at their weaknesses; and now she had learned her own weakness, the disposition to laugh at others had departed from her, and was replaced by great forbearance.

She began to wonder whether the regeneration of society was to be effected by revolutionary methods, and was not best accomplished by the slow processes of leavening with human charity.

How often had she supposed that happiness was impossible apart from the amenities of life, that in the middle class, with its imperfect culture and narrow aims, there could be no true felicity; that in the lowest classes, where there was no refinement of taste, no polish of mind, no discipline of intellect, life must be insupportable in its wretchedness. But now she saw that happiness was of

general distribution and was not to be arrogated as a prerogative of one class alone, that, indeed, it seemed to lose its freshness, its gaiety in proportion as knowledge increased and culture advanced. The two Welshes were happy; James happy in his work of furious onslaught against aristocracy, Tryphœna happy in the little sphere of household duties, and supremely happy in giving food to her baby. Not only so, but the slave, the maid-of-all-work, was happy down the area, and sang over her drudgery.

Then Arminell recalled the game she had played as a child with her companions in a circle, holding a string with a gold ring threaded on it. One child stood in the centre, and tried to discover who had the ring, and the ring passed about the living hoop, and there was no hand under which the ring might not be found. It was the same with the round game of life. The gold ring of happiness was not retained by those in gay clothing, nor to be found only under the taper fingers and in the delicate palms, as often it slipped under the broad flat hands of those in washing calico gowns, and quite as often was retained by the laughing rogues in rags, whose rough hands were begrimed with dirt.

Consequently Arminell's ideas on this point, as on many another, underwent radical change. This also went towards the framing. Arminell's manner changed. Her impatience was replaced by gentleness and consideration for others. Instead of her thoughts radiating from and reverting to self, they played about others, to the forgetfulness of self.

An underlying sadness never deserted her, but never intruded on notice. She constrained herself to be cheerful, and its presence was only revealed by great sweetness of disposition. She took interest in what interested others, and did not force on others interest in her own concerns.

There are frames ready made for all of us. It falls to

the lot of an exceptional few to have frames made to fit them. Some of us make frames for ourselves, and as we always over-estimate our size such frames are never suitable. As we cannot expand or contract our frames to our liking, we must do the other thing, stretch and shape our pictures to them. I have seen coloured sketches on an elastic material capable of being extended indefinitely. Well for us if our life's picture be painted on such accommodating material.

CHAPTER XLV.

FAREWELL.

THE house at Chillacot had been temporarily repaired, and made habitable, so that Jingles and his mother could occupy it; but the young man shortly after the death of his reputed father entered into negotiations with the railway company for the sale of the place. His mother was shaken by what had occurred. She had been threatened with paralysis, and her speech affected for a few days; but she speedily recovered activity of tongue. There was now nothing in Orleigh to retain the Saltrens. The mother had never liked the dismal house, it was not grand enough to meet her ideas, for was she not the sister of a gentleman of the press, a man who was certain, according to her account, to contest that division of the county in the Radical interest at the next election? She resolved to settle in London. There she would be able to assume more consequence than where she and her antecedents were well known. But Mrs. Saltren laid down to her son that it was not to any part of London she would go. She must have a house in the West End—her brother, she said, lived in the West End. There was no qualifying S. before or C. after the W. on his address. Those persons who lived in S. W. or W. C. *might* be gentlemen, those who lived in division W. *were* gentlemen. As certain estates in Austria ennoble their pur-

chasers, so did living in the W. quarter of town elevate socially. At Orleigh Mrs. Saltren could not aspire to occupy such a position as that which her fancy pictured herself as adorning in town. There she could figure as the widow of a captain ; at Orleigh it was known too well that the captaincy of her husband had been over a gang of miners.

The sale of Chillacot would enable her to spend more money than was usually at her command, and she talked grandly of having a carriage and a button-boy. At Orleigh she could not speak as freely of her acquaintance with the Lamerton family as she could elsewhere, for at Orleigh it was known that her situation at the Park had been a menial one. The railway company paid liberally for Chillacot, but not so liberally as Mrs. Saltren figured to herself, nor was the capital thus acquired likely to cover all the expenditure which she flattered herself she would be able to launch forth into.

Marianne Saltren had exercised sufficient discretion to hold her tongue about her husband's concern in the death of Lord Lamerton, but she was sufficiently aware of her own frailty to doubt whether she could retain the secret for ever among confidential friends, and she knew that to trust an intimate friend with a secret was the way to publish it to the world. Anxiety lest she should be betrayed into communicating what had better remain unknown acted strongly upon her to make her desire to leave Orleigh speedily.

The young man, moreover, had no wish to stay in a place which was associated in his mind with too many painful and humiliating recollections. It would not be possible for him there to escape meeting Lady Lamerton and little Giles, and such encounters must be productive of distress to her ladyship and embarrassment to himself.

At Orleigh, moreover, there were no means of his earning for himself a livelihood. His mother was welcome, in his

eyes, to spend the money derived from the sale, money to which he had, he felt, a legal but no moral right. The captain was not his father, therefore he did not consider himself entitled to what he left.

The desire to make his way in literature had deserted him under the rebuff received from Mr. Welsh, and his self-confidence had not recovered the blow it had been given to make him feel himself qualified to act as political teacher of men.

He resolved on taking a clerkship in an office. His pride was gone. So long as he could earn enough to support himself and his mother, he did not care in what sort of business he made the money, so long as it was fairly and honourably earned.

As the day approached on which it was arranged that he and his mother should leave Chillacot, Saltren's heart sank ; but not so that of his mother. She became more talkative and more boastful. Only since he had discovered how false she had been in the story of his parentage, had his eyes been open to her unreliability. Hitherto he had looked up to her with respect. He had never felt much tenderness towards old Saltren, and his mother by her complaints had bred in him antagonism towards his father as if he were a man who misunderstood his mother and failed to show her the love and regard she deserved. There are heads like those of thistles, that are full of feather-light, mischievous thoughts, which are blown about the country and in proper soil germinate and produce a crop of weeds. Such was the head of Marianne Saltren, but Jingles was sufficiently humbled to acknowledge that unless his own heart had proved suitable soil, rich in self-conceit, these thistle-down fancies would not have rooted.

Mrs. Saltren's acquaintances called to say farewell, and before them her boasting was so ridiculous that it covered her son with shame. He knew what the circumstances of

James Welsh were, and what the position was that he occupied in town.

Young Saltren hesitated for some days how to act towards Lady Lamerton. Should he call and bid her farewell, or should he forbear? To both a meeting must be painful. If he considered his natural shrinking from an unpleasant scene, he would desist from paying her his respects; but his conscience told him that to depart without an apology and a word of explanation would be ungenerous.

Accordingly, on his last day at Chillacot, he walked over to the Park, and asked to see her ladyship. Lady Lamerton was engaged at the moment with some ladies who had called to pay their condolence, so at his request he was shown into the library; and the butler undertook to inform her ladyship that he was there, as soon as she was free from her visitors.

As he sat in the familiar room, he mused on what he had to say. The situation was peculiar, as it was difficult. Lady Lamerton knew nothing, he supposed, and need know nothing, about the mistake he had made concerning his parentage. He could not tell her the story which he and Arminell had believed, and on which they had acted, yet without this key to their conduct it was hardly possible to explain it—to justify it even with the key was impossible.

As Jingles sat in the study meditating, the door opened slightly, and little Giles's face appeared at it. The moment he saw his old tutor he uttered an exclamation of delight, and ran to him. "Mr. Saltren, why have you left me?" he asked; "my dear papa is dead, and I am so unhappy. Why do you not come back to us? and Arminell is dead also. I have no one here but mamma. I love mamma, but I want you also."

Jingles took the little boy on his knee. The child had a delicate, intelligent face.

"Did you hear that I had arrived?" asked Saltren.

"No; I looked into the library because—I really can

hardly say why. Since I have lost papa, I go all about the house ; I know I cannot find him, but I cannot help running into one room and then another seeking him. I heard the study door open, and that was papa's room, and I thought—that is—I didn't think—I wondered who could be in papa's room. I was fond of coming here and sitting on his lap and hearing about his rides and his spills when foxhunting. Whenever I hear a door open or a step on the stairs, I think papa is coming, and then next moment I know it cannot be so. Why do you not come back ? I am doing no lessons now, and am tired of holiday."

"You are going to school shortly, Giles."

"Yes, I know, but not till the term begins. Nurse says that I am my lord now, and that mamma will call me Lamerton instead of Giles. But I don't like it. I don't wish to take anything that was papa's. I always persuade myself he will come back. Did they tell you that I saw a black coach come to the door and carry away papa ? The black coach never came for Arminell. When I saw that, papa would not let me tell mamma lest it should frighten her. Why was not Arminell buried in the vault ?"

"Have you had any of your bad dreams lately ?"

"No, sir, but two nights ago I thought that papa came to my crib side and kissed me. I did not see, but I felt him ; and he put his hand on my head and stroked my hair, exactly the same way he did that night when I had my bad dreams and saw the black coach and screamed. I know papa's kiss even when I do not hear him speak, and also the touch of his hand, which is not heavy, but very light. I told nurse about it in the night, after he was gone, but she said it was all stuff and nonsense, and I must go to sleep. There comes mamma."

The boy jumped off his tutor's knee and stood aside. He had been brought up to old-fashioned courtesy, and never remained seated when his mother entered the room.

Lady Lamerton bowed stiffly to Jingles. She was dressed in the deepest mourning, and looked pale and delicate. At a sign from her the little fellow withdrew. She indicated a chair, but Saltren, who had risen, did not reseat himself. She did not speak, but waited for what he had to say, and she remained standing.

"My lady," said the young man, "my conscience would not suffer me to depart, probably never again to revisit Orleigh, without coming here to express to you in few words what I feel in every fibre of my heart. I know how much I owe you, my lady,—to your forbearance and kindness towards a"—he hesitated a moment, and then said the word firmly—"towards a Prig. I have not the words at my command in which even to allude to the debt I owe to one who——"

She bowed her head, she understood to whom he referred. His voice refused to proceed with the sentence.

"I have come, my lady, in the first place to tell you that never, while life lasts, will I forget what I owe to you and to his lordship."

"It is a pity"—she began, and then checked herself; but a faint colour came into her lips, a flush of anger at the recollection of how he had repaid the kindness shown him.

Jingles waited for her to finish the sentence, but as she did not do so, he said, "It is a pity I did not remember this earlier. Yes, that I now admit, to my indelible shame. I acted most ungratefully. I do not know, my lady, what Miss Inglett has told you, and therefore I am placed in a difficulty."

"She has told me everything," answered Lady Lamerton, "at least so I suppose. Here is her letter to me, which you are at liberty to peruse, and you will see by it if there is anything kept back which ought to be told, or which you wish to tell me."

She extended a note to him, and he took it, and ran his

eye through it. It was written in Arminell's firm hand, and it told everything, in her plain, decisive, and direct manner—she hid nothing, she excused nothing.

He returned the letter to Lady Lamerton.

"There is but one thing for me to add—or rather," said he, "one correction for me to make. Miss Inglett takes the blame on herself. It should rest mainly on my shoulders. Without my offer of help she never would have left this house. I have no word of self-excuse. No one can reproach me more severely than I reproach myself. In no eyes can I figure more despicably than in my own. That is all I have to say—to assure you of my gratitude and my regret. I thank you, Lady Lamerton, that you have permitted me to see you and say this."

"Mr. Saltren," said she, "I will not disguise the fact that you—you and my step-daughter between you—have occasioned me more grief than has even the death of my dear lord. But I am not justified in refusing to accept your expression of sorrow, though perhaps it is too early yet, and the wound too fresh, for me to be able heartily to forgive you both. I acknowledge that you acted for the best when you discovered your error, in returning promptly to Chilla-cot, so as to silence the voice of scandal. Whether Arminell was wise in acting as she did admits of difference of opinion. For her decision you are not responsible. She tells me what you proposed—to telegraph for her maid to be sent to Portland Place, and that the maid should find her at her aunt's and accompany her home. If that plan had been executed, only ourselves would have known the secret history of that London escapade. But she elected otherwise. She would punish herself for having thought unworthily of her dear father, and for having embittered his last hour of life. It is possible, indeed it is probable, that it was the distress and alarm which he felt, as he took that fatal walk, that blinded him as to his course, so that he fell

over the cliff. I dare say Arminell has judged right in resolving to suffer. I do not blame her. There is something honourable in her resolve to abide the consequences of her own foolish act. She has also spared me the difficulty of meeting her under the circumstances, and controlling and disguising my feelings towards her. If we had met immediately, I hardly know how I could have behaved with composure and charity towards her. I never, never could have loved her as I have loved her heretofore ; for I could not have forgotten the dishonour she had done in thought to the purest life, the noblest soul——” Then her ladyship broke down.

After a minute she recovered herself, and proceeded, “She has foreseen this, and has resolved to relieve me of the restraint, to spare me the trial. I thank her for that. I confess, Mr. Saltren, that when I heard you were here my first impulse was to decline an interview. But on second thoughts I resolved to accord you a meeting. It is as well that no one should suspect the wrong you have done ; and it is right that I should accept your expression of penitence, for we daily ask of Heaven to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive such as have trespassed against us.” She paused.

Saltren’s heart was too full for him to speak.

Silence ensued for a minute or two. Each stood, each with lowered eyes, and with a struggle raging in each for control over the stirred emotions.

“I will say good-bye,” said her ladyship, “no doubt for ever. After what has passed it is as well that we should never meet again. I am glad that you have called. I am glad that I have received you. I shall think of you henceforth more kindly, in the light of one who, having done wrong, devotes the rest of his life to striving to do his duty. Mr. Saltren, our feelings must not be allowed to guide us, but principle.”

Giles Inglett Saltren walked home much depressed, and

yet content that he had seen Lady Lamerton ; depressed because he had seen her and Giles for the last time, and content because he had done right in seeking the interview.

He felt now that he had thrown away an opportunity of in some little way repaying Lady Lamerton for the kindness shown him. But for his mistake he might at this time have rendered her valuable aid, such as, in a time of confusion consequent on the fall of the main pillar of a house, must always occur. He might have been of use to her in a thousand little ways, knowing as he did the ramifications of life in the great house ; of use also now with the boy in giving bent to his fresh and pliable character.

A remarkable difference is found to exist between the stages of development in the physical and moral natures. The insect passes through three degrees, the larva, the pupa, and imago, the last phase being the noblest, and the middle the most torpid of the three conditions. With man and woman physically it is different. The childhood indeed corresponds to the grub stage, but this is immediately followed by the butterfly condition, and that of cessation of energies and deterioration of beauty follows as the third period. In psychical development, however, man follows the same course as the insect. After the first voracious acquisitive period of growth, comes the pupa condition, when the human conscience, glutted with as much knowledge and experience as it deems sufficient, encases itself in a chrysalis of conceit, and falls asleep in self-sufficiency. Then, after a period of comatosity, comes a shock of awakening life, the breath of a new spirit passes over the earth, the sun smites with provocative ray, and the sleeping soul stretches itself, and suddenly finds its case too strait for it. Then that horny hide of self-conceit is riven from top to bottom, and falls away, and at length the true, the perfect spiritual character comes forth, flutters its wings for a moment, gains fresh courage and expands them. It is in-

deed true that some insects never escape out of their chrysalis, and some birds stifle in their shells through lack of force to rive the encasing bound. And it is also true that there are men and women who to the last remain hide-bound in their self-esteem; and the moral sense, the spiritual force, the power of development becomes extinct in them.

In our gardens the spade occasionally brings up these dead pupæ in their horny coffins; and we are continually coming across human beings in society, in like manner enchrysalised in conceit, in which they remain eternally encoffined.

It must not be supposed that the transition condition is without its throes and effort. On the contrary, the advance to the better, the perfect life is only possible through effort, and the effort is stimulated by the sense of oppression, through realisation of the straitness of the shell.

Hard had been the case that enclosed Jingles, but the Giles Inglett Saltren we now see had completely emancipated himself from it.

When he opened the door of Chillacot, his mother said—
“Giles, I have secured a servant. I have promised Tamsine Kite a place in my establishment as lady’s-maid. She will attend me to town.”

“But, mother——”

“My dear, it is settled; and see, here is Captain Tubb.”

“Captain Tubb!”

“Yes, he has come to pay me his respects before I leave, and to congratulate me on the disposal of Chillacot for so handsome a sum, and to inquire what I propose doing with the money—and even to suggest a desirable investment for it.”

CHAPTER XLVI.

ON FLOWER-POTS.

SALTREN moved with his mother to London, and went with her into lodgings. Mrs. Saltren had insisted on taking Thomasine with her, and incurred accordingly the additional expense of maintaining her where she was not wanted. Thomasine was not likely to be of use till the Saltrens got a house of their own, and Giles did not choose to take one till he had got into a situation and was able to see what his prospects were likely to be. As lady's-maid to Mrs. Saltren, Thomasine was, of course, no good at all, or likely, to employ that serviceable Yorkshire word again, "to frame" as one.

"Whatever you do," said Mrs. Saltren, "mind that we live in the West End. Why don't you go to Shepherd's Bush, near the Welshes? A man of my brother's political and literary position must have hosts of distinguished acquaintances, and a woman of Tryphœna's accomplishments and beauty must have the *entrée* into the highest circles. If we lived near them we might get good introductions. If we don't get settled to my liking shortly in a fashionable quarter of town, I do not know but that I may return to Orleigh."

"Return to Orleigh!" echoed the son, "why, mother, I thought that your desire had been to leave it. Besides, we have not a house there any more."

"I know we have not," answered his mother, "but what *we* may be without, it is possible that *I* might secure."

"I do not understand," said Jingles.

"I think," said Mrs. Saltren, "that it is proper the money paid by the railway company for Chillacot should be put into the bank in my name and not in yours."

"I have already told you, mother," said Giles, "that I will not touch it myself. I consider it yours, not mine."

"But I have not the disposal of it."

"Indeed, mother, you have; it is entered in your name, not in mine, already. I have no account at the bank at all."

"How can you talk nonsense," said Mrs. Saltren; "you have all your savings—quite a fortune—which you got at the Park whilst tutor to young Giles."

"My dear mother, I had not the time to accumulate a fortune. I was tutor there for eighteen months, and what I saved was a hundred and twenty-five pounds, and that sum is already disposed of."

"Disposed of! what have you done with it?"

"I have purchased an annuity for some one."

"For whom? for me?"

"No, mother, not for you. You have the purchase money of Chillacot."

"For whom then? I insist on knowing."

"For a man who has been crippled, and is unable to earn his livelihood."

"What nonsense! What absurd fit of heroic charity has come over you? Since you went to town in that strange, hurried fashion at the time of your father's death, you have been altered from what you were before, as different as canister beef from that which is fresh from the ox."

Giles said nothing in self-defence.

"But I insist on knowing on whom you have thrown this money away."

"I do not wish to tell—on a man who has the nearest of claims on me."

Mrs. Saltren considered, then coloured, looked mortified, and did not prosecute her inquiries. "Well," she said petulantly, "a fool and his money are soon parted. I am very glad I insisted on having the Chillacot purchase money removed from your fingering. Please to ring for my lady's-maid."

"Lady's-maid, mother?"

"For Thomasine. I want to speak to her. You may leave the room. Here we have been in town a week and the Welshes have not called. If we are to be more solitary here than we were at Chillacot, I shall go back to Orleigh. Ring for my lady's-maid."

Mrs. Saltren was, indeed, becoming tired of London. Her opportunities for boasting were confined to talks with her landlady and her landlady's visitors.

It did her soul good, said the woman of the lodgings, to hear of lords and ladies; it was as comforting and improving as the words that dropped from the lips of the Reverend Hezekiah Bumpas. She felt it down to her toes.

Mrs. Saltren indulged her in this particular to her heart's content. She knew many persons of distinction. Lady Hermione Woodhead, who lived in Portland Place, had once been her intimate friend, till they differed about Lord Lamerton's marriage. What had made them differ? It did not become her to speak, but his lordship had set his affections elsewhere, she could not name in what direction, and had been inveigled by the Woodheads into an alliance with their family. It was a mistake, an entanglement managed by designing women.

Lord Lamerton was ill after his engagement, so was another person who must be nameless. When Lady Lamerton died, then his first flame had married—without love, and in his desperation he married again. Of course

after that first estrangement she and Lady Hermione never spoke. She—Marianne Saltren—had passed the Earl of Anstey's family repeatedly without recognition. If her landlady doubted her word, let her accompany her to Hyde Park, and when the Anstey family drove by, she would see that they took no notice of each other. After what had happened it could not be otherwise. But though Mrs. Saltren could talk what nonsense came into her vain head to the lodging-house keeper, she was disappointed that she could not to a larger circle, disappointed at the little notice she attracted in town. It was most strange that the Welshes took no notice of her. She feared that they were going to treat her with coldness and not introduce her to the distinguished circle of acquaintances in which they moved.

I knew a young girl who was given lessons in oil-painting before she had learned how to draw, and a somewhat similar inversion of order went on in the instruction of Thomasine Kite, whom Marianne Saltren began to train to be a lady's-maid before the girl knew the elements of domestic service, having previously been a farm-maid, feeding pigs and scouring milk-pails.

Thomasine did not take readily to instruction, least of all could she acquire deference towards her mistress ; and Mrs. Saltren was irritated at the freedom with which the girl accosted her, and at the laughter she provoked in Thomasine when she, Marianne, assumed her grand manner. Moreover, she discovered that her landlady had been questioning the girl in private as to the circumstances and former position of her mistress, and Mrs. Saltren was afraid that the revelations in the kitchen might cause some of her stories to be discounted. Fortunately for her, the broad dialect of Thomasine was almost unintelligible to the landlady, and the girl had the cunning of the uneducated, which leads them to evade giving a direct answer to any question put to them

Giles Inglett Saltren was unaware till he came to town that Arminell was settled in the house of the Welshes. He knew that his uncle had undertaken to arrange matters of business for her, and to look out for a house and companion for her, but he had refrained from asking questions about her, from motives of delicacy. Indeed he had scarcely written to Mr. Welsh since his return to Orleigh. He was resolved not again to seek his assistance on his own behalf, but to find a situation for himself. When, however, he came to town, and met his uncle at an office in the city, he learned from him where Arminell was, and at once urged on Mr. Welsh the mischief which would ensue should Mrs. Saltren discover that Miss Inglett was alive and their lodger. Welsh saw that, and undertook to prevent his wife from calling on Mrs. Saltren, and promised to keep his eye open for an opportunity of placing Arminell elsewhere. Marianne Saltren shared the prevailing opinion that Miss Inglett was dead, and Giles was specially anxious lest she should discover that this was not the case. If she were to see Arminell, would it be possible to control her tongue? Would she not be eager to publish the fact that the Honourable Miss Inglett was a guest of her brother and sister-in-law?

It had been Saltren's intention to keep away from Arminell, but under this alarm he felt it his duty to see her and precipitate her departure from Shepherd's Bush. His mother could not be kept indefinitely away from her brother's house. One word from his mother might frustrate Arminell's intention, upset her plans. From Mrs. Saltren the report would rapidly spread. Mrs. Cribbage had ears like those of the trusty servant on the Winchester escutcheon, and without the trusty servant's padlock on the tongue. If once the truth got wind, to what difficulties would the Lamerton family be put, now that they had accepted and published the death of the girl!

The author of this novel was involved many years ago in an amateur performance of "Macbeth," but the sole part he took in the tragedy was to sit in the midst of the witches' cauldron, and ignite the several coloured fires which were destined to flame, as scale of dragon, tooth of wolf, liver of blaspheming Jew, were cast in. But when, to Locke's lovely music, the imps and witches danced around the vessel, then it was his function to explode a so-called flower-pot, which is a roaring, spirting composition of fire-work. Unfortunately, at the first chorus and circular dance, the blazing flower-pot tumbled back upon the author, concealed within the depths of the cauldron, and, to save himself from an *auto-da-fé* end, he enveloped the flower-pot in a rug, and screwed it up tight and sat on it. So the scene ended, and, believing that the fire-work was completely extinguished, he then unfolded the rug. No sooner, however, did the air reach the smothered fire-work, than it bounced, and roared, and blazed with doubled vigour. It threw out sheaths of flame, it shot off roman candles, it ejected a score of crackers and filled the entire stage with smoke, and very nearly burnt down the theatre.

Saltren dreaded something of this sort happening now. The fire-work of scandal had, indeed, been muffled up and smothered, when first it began to fizz; but—who could tell?—if it got air again, even through a pin-hole, it would burst into furious conflagration and defy all efforts made to suppress it.

The writer of this story takes this occasion of apologising—if apology be necessary—for the introduction, on more than one occasion, of his own adventures, his own opinions, and, if you will it, his own prejudices into the course of his narrative. He will be told that the author should disappear as a personality, just as the actor merges his individuality in that of the character he represents. He must treat himself as a flower-pot and wrap himself up in the *garde-robe* of

his *dramatis personæ*. I might, of course, have told that story of the flower-pot in the cauldron as having happened to Jingles at Orleigh, but then I could never have told that story again at a dinner-party, for my guest, next but one, would say, "Ah! that happened to my brother, or to my uncle, or to an intimate friend;" and how can I deny that Jingles did not stand in one of these relations to him?

Montaigne, the essayist, was a sad sinner in the introduction of himself into his prose. The essay on which he was engaged might be on the history of Virgil, or Julius Cæsar, but there was certain to creep into it more of Montaigne than of either. The younger Scaliger rebuked him for it, and, after having acquainted the world with the ancestry of Montaigne, he adds, "His great fault is this, that he must needs inform you, 'For my part I am a lover of white wines or red wines.' What the Devil signifies it to the public," adds Scaliger, "whether he is a lover of white wines or red wines?" So, but with more delicacy, and without the introduction of that personage whose name has been written with a capital D, the reader may say to the author, What the blank does it signify what you think, what you like, what you did, whether you ever sat in a cauldron, whether you ever had a flower-pot fall on your head, whether you sought to extinguish it by sitting on it—go on with your story.

But a man's personality—I mean my own—is like that piece of pyrotechnic contrivance, a flower-pot. He wraps it up, he smothers it under fold after fold of fiction; but, fizz! fizz! out it comes at last—here, there, on all sides, and cannot be disguised. There is, to be sure, that subterfuge, the use of the first person plural in place of the first person singular, but is it not more vain-glorious to talk of We, as if we were royalties, instead of plain and modest I?

When Giles Saltren arrived at the house in the Avenue, Shepherd's Bush, Arminell flushed with pleasure, sprang

from her seat, and with outstretched hand started to receive him; then she checked herself, and said, "I am glad to see you. Oh, Mr. Saltren, I hear nothing of Orleigh, of dear, dear Orleigh! I have the heartache for news. I want to hear my own tongue wag on the subject nearest my heart, and to listen to tidings about the people I knew there. I am like a departed soul looking back on familiar scenes, and unable to visit them and old friends, and unable to communicate with them. I am Dives, and Orleigh is to me Paradise. You have come thence with a drop of fresh news wherewith to cool my thirsty tongue."

"I am Lazarus indeed," said Saltren, "but out of Paradise. Ask me what you will about Orleigh, and I will answer what I can."

"There is one matter that teases me," she said; "I promised a poor fellow, before I left, that he should have employment at a small wage, and I do not suppose he has had what I undertook to give him."

"Do you mean Samuel Ceely? He is provided for."

"How so?"

"He has come in, unexpectedly, for a little money, wherewith an annuity has been purchased."

"I am glad of that. And—my mother and Giles, have you seen them?"

"Yes, I called to say farewell to both. Lady Lamerton looks worn and sad, and your dear brother is out of spirits; but this could not be otherwise."

Arminell's eyes filled, and she went to the window and dried her tears.

"Miss Inglett," said the young man, after she had been given time to recover herself, "I have only ventured to call on you for one reason, that I might impress on you the necessity of leaving this house. My mother is in town, and she must not be allowed to know or even suspect that you are alive and here."

Arminell did not speak for some time. Presently she said, "Do not let us talk about anything at present but Orleigh. I am parched for news. I daresay there is nothing of tremendous importance to relate, but I care for little details. How was the house looking? Were the trees turning to their autumn tints? The Virginian creeper, was that touched with crimson? How are Mr. and Mrs. Macduff? I could not abide them when I was at Orleigh, I could be thankful now for a sound of their delightful Scotch brogue. What is Giles going to do? dear little boy! I would give a week's sunlight for a kiss from his moist lips—which formerly I objected to. And mamma—has she been to the Sunday School since—since—?"

Then Arminell's tears flowed again.

After another pause, during which the young man looked through the photographic album on the table, Arminell recovered herself, and said, "Do not suppose for a moment that I regret my decision. My conscience is relieved. I am beginning to acquire fresh interests. I am now making a frock for baby. I am godmother to Mrs. Welsh's child, and have come to be very fond of him. But there—tell me something about Orleigh, and Giles, and my mother—about any person or animal, or shrub or tree there. And, oh! can you obtain for me some photographs of the place? I should cherish them above everything I have. I dream of Orleigh. I think of Orleigh, and—I shall never see dear Orleigh again."

"I will come another day, Miss Inglett, and tell you all that I can, but to-day I must urge on you the vital necessity of at once leaving this house."

"Your aunt can hardly get on without me."

"She managed formerly without you, she must do the same again."

"But there was no baby in the house then. And, besides, the new cook who was to have come has failed. The

last went up a ladder sixty feet high, and it took several constables and a sergeant to get her down."

Arminell laughed through her tears.

"Miss Inglett, consider what the difficulty would be in which her ladyship would be placed should it become known—"

"Mrs. Saltren and her lady's-maid!"

The door was thrown open by the maid-of-all-work, and she ushered into the drawing-room the person of all others—except perhaps Mrs. Cribbage—whom it was desired to keep from the house, and she was followed by Thomasine Kite.

Verily, the flower-pot was not smothered. It was about to fizz and puff again.

CHAPTER XLVII.

EQUILIBRIUM.

THE story is told of a mouse having been hidden under a dish-cover, and a married pair introduced into the dining-room and invited to partake of every dish except that which remained covered. When left to themselves, the woman, contrary to the advice of her husband, raised the cover, and out ran the mouse. Blue Beard forbade Fatima to open one door in his castle, and of course she tried the forbidden key. There was one tree in the midst of Paradise of which our first parents were not allowed to eat, and of course they nibbled at the fruit to discover how it tasted. All these stories point to the truth that nothing can be retained from human inquisitiveness. A secret resembles a mouse more than an apple or a dead wife of Blue Beard, for the mouse escapes when once uncovered and can no more be hidden, whereas the apple disappears when eaten, and the dead woman is locked up again. A secret when once out is all over the house, and is far too wary to be trapped again.

Who would expect to find a mouse under a dish-cover? So with secrets, they are let loose from the most unlikely places, and many of us know that so well that we devote our energies to, and spend our time in lifting china cups, opening snuff-boxes, removing lids of tea-caddies, unsnap-

ping purses, pulling out drawers, boring holes in casks, in the hopes of letting out secrets. We suspect our acquaintance and "visit" their goods, as if we were custom-house officers in search of what is contraband. We know that they have a forbidden secret somewhere, and we search and probe everywhere to discover it.

There are mice everywhere; if we hold our breath and remain still for two minutes we can hear them scratching and squeaking; and there are secrets everywhere, behind the wainscot, under the floor, in the cupboard. Once I knew of a nest of mice in a gentleman's boot, and once in a lady's muff; and secrets nest and breed in quite as extraordinary places—in a pocket, in a bunch of flowers, in envelopes, under pillows.

Æsop tells of a beautiful cat that was transformed into a woman, but this woman could never forget her feline instinct to run after a mouse. A great many ladies I know have the same feline instinct to spring out of bed, up from their sofas, to make a dart after a secret, if they hear but the slightest footsteps, see but a whisker. I do not blame them. Men are sportsmen, why should not women be mousers? We find pleasure in starting a hare, why should not a woman find as much in starting a couching secret?

I do not blame them for their love of sport, but for what they do with their game when it is caught. We bag ours, they let theirs run. Samson did the same. He caught foxes and tied firebrands to their tails and sent them into the standing corn of the Philistines. Our secret-hunters, when they have caught their game, tie brimstone matches to their tails and send them among the stores of their neighbours.

I do not believe in the possibility of concealing secrets, and therefore never try to keep them. As for pursuing a secret when once out, that is labour in vain, it changes form, it doubles, it dives, it has as many artifices as a

chased fox. As soon recover a secret as recondense volatile essential oils that have been spilt. A secret is not safe in our own heads, for our heads are of amber, and the secret is visible to every one who looks at us, like a congealed fly therein.

In one of the Arabian Nights' Tales a princess goes after a necromancer who has transformed himself into a scorpion, and she takes the shape of a serpent; the wizard, hard pressed, becomes a cat, and the princess attacks him in the disguise of a wolf. Then the cat becomes a seed, and the wolf a cock, thereat the seed falls into a canal and is transmuted into a trout, which is at once chased by the princess in shape of a pike. Finally both issue in flames from the water, the wizard is reduced to ashes, but so also is the princess. If we try to overtake and make an end of a secret, we shall meet with less success than did this princess. She at last succeeded in destroying her game, but we, in our efforts to catch and make an end of an unpleasant secret, get set on flames ourselves. If we have anything we do not want our neighbours to know, and it has got out, we had better let it run; we cannot recover it. Indeed, I believe that the best way to conceal what we do not want to have known is to expose it for sale, to dangle it before the eyes of every one, like those men outside the Exchange who offer spiders at the end of threads of elastic for one penny. Nobody buys. No one even looks at them. But were one of these fellows to hide such a black putty spider in his hat, up his arm, in his pocket, a crowd would collect and pull him to pieces to find the spider.

It was not immediately that Arminell realised the serious consequences of Mrs. Saltren's visit, but the young man knew at once that all chance of the secret being respected was at an end.

"I am interrupting," said the widow, knowingly, "I am sure I hadn't the wish. I came to see Mrs. Welsh, and

never expected to find my son here, much less Miss Inglett."

"Mrs. Welsh is upstairs with the baby," said Arminell. "You have not seen your nephew. Shall I fetch him, Mrs. Saltren?"

"Not for the world, Miss Inglett. I will run upstairs and find my sister-in-law, who, I do say, has been negligent in calling on me. But if the mountain won't go to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. I'm sure I don't want to intrude here. You may leave the room, Thomasine, I don't want you to follow me up to the nursery. Go down to the kitchen. Every one ought to know her own place."

When the girl had disappeared, Mrs. Saltren said confidentially, "We brought the young person to town, and she don't understand how to friz the hair, and me wanting to wear a fringe. However she could have had the face to offer for my situation as lady's-maid, passes my understanding. But, miss, the conceit of the rising generation is surprising. I want to ask Mrs. Welsh to take the creature off my hands in any capacity she likes to name. She might do as parlour-maid, or nurse-girl, or cook, anything but lady's-maid. I've tried to teach her to fold gowns, but folding is like music or painting—you must be borne with the gift; it cannot be learnt; and as some have no ear for tune, and others no eye for colour, so have some no natural gift for folding. You can't make, as they say, a fichu out of a bustle. I had once a red flannel coverlet, and a hole was burnt in it, so I turned it into a petticoat. When the hot weather came I couldn't bear it, and as the Band of Hope wanted a banner, I did a non-alcoholic motto on it in straw letters, and converted it into a Temperance banner, and very inspiriting it was. It is the same with girls. Some you can adapt to all sorts of purposes, others you can't."

When Mrs. Saltren had left the room in quest of her

sister-in-law and the baby, Giles said in a tone of discouragement, "I do not now know what is to be done. It is inevitable that the news of your being here should reach Orleigh, either through my mother or the girl, probably through both, not perhaps at once, but eventually. Then—what a difficult position Lady Lamerton will be in!"

Arminell looked down on the carpet, and traced the pattern with her foot. Presently she looked up and said, "I see—I never did justice to the merits of humdrum. Even when I was shown my folly and acknowledged my fault, I must needs still play the heroine, and take a bold step, not altogether justifiable, because it landed me in falsehood, and involved others in untruth. But I thought then it was the simplest course for me to follow to escape having to equivocate and even lie. The straight course is always the best. Now I admit that. Short cuts do not always lead where one thinks they will. I wish I had acted with less precipitation and more modesty, had listened to your advice and acted without dissimulation. For myself now I do not care, but I do not see how my mother and other relations can extricate themselves from the dilemma in which I have placed them."

"Nor do I."

"I am neither dead nor alive. The situation is almost grotesque. I wish it were not distressing. Do not misunderstand me. It is painful to myself only, as every sharp lesson cuts. But I am more vexed for the sake of others than for my own. I have been a fool, an utter fool."

She put her hands over her eyes.

"Upon my word, Mr. Saltren," she said after an interval, "I have hardly an atom of self-confidence left. There never was a more perverse girl than myself, such a profound blunderer. I make a mistake whatever I do. What is to be done? What can I do?"

Giles Saltren was silent. The predicament was one from which there was no escape.

"Your mother's red coverlet was better than me," said Arminell. "That did serve some good purpose, to whatever end it was turned, but I always get from one difficulty into another, and drag my friends out of one discomfort into another still worse. Only here—here am I of any good at all; I was born into a wrong sphere, only now have I returned to that system in which I ought to have been planted when called into existence. And yet even in this I produce a disturbing effect on the system of planets I have left."

"You cannot remain in this house, Miss Inglett, not now for the reason I gave at first, but because too much is put upon you."

"Nothing is put on me—I take on me what I feel qualified to execute. Do you remember the answer made by the young Persian to Cyrus, when the prince reprimanded him because his actions were not in accordance with his previously expressed sentiments? 'Sire,' he said, 'I perceive that I have two souls in me, one wilful and wicked, and the other modest and righteous. Sometimes one is awake and at other times the second.' So it is with me. Now I trust the nobler soul is rubbing its eyes and stretching itself, and the sandman is scattering dust in the eyes of the baser soul. My old soul was haughty and lived in an atmosphere of extravagance, and the new one is humble, and delights in the breath of commonplace. Do you remember, Mr. Saltren, telling me of the effect of the contrast to you of a return from Orleigh Park to Chillacot? You said that you were unfitted by the grandeur of the former to endure the meanness of the latter. At the time when you said this, I thought that such a translation to me would be unendurable, but the translation has been effected, and I am not miserable. On the contrary, but for my self-reproach and looking back on lost faces and scenes, I should be happier here :

for the childlike spirit is waking in me, which is content with trifles."

"Happier—here! Miss Inglett, surely not."

"Yes—happier. I am happy in helping others. I am become useful to Mrs. Welsh, I relieve her of the baby, I can even cook fairly, I make the glass and silver shine. The work and worry here were more than your aunt could bear. Cooks are scarce as saints. The last your aunt had—oh! I have already mentioned the circumstances. I will not repeat them. I do not feel that the house is small, indeed I am glad that it is not larger. We talk a good deal about the misdeeds of servants, and the difficulty there is in getting cooks; in my former world we talked a good deal about the unscrupulousness of politicians, and the difficulty there was in getting morality among statesmen—political morality I mean. We discuss now the humours of the baby, what his dribbling means—whether teeth or disorder; and we discussed then the humours of the public, and what the dribble meant that flowed so freely at public meetings. We think now how we may cut out and alter garments for the little creature; and then, what adjustments and changes were needed for the satisfaction of the public. Conversation on each subject is as interesting and as profitless. I thought at one time that I could not live away from rocks and trees—I hardly miss them now. I have no time to consider whether I want them or not, because I am engaged all day. I really believe that the servant girl, the slavey, as your uncle calls her, is happier than your aunt or me, because she has the fewest responsibilities and the most work."

Arminell spoke fast, half in jest, half in tears; she spoke quickly, to conceal the emotion she felt.

"Did you see a picture at the Royal Academy a few years ago representing the Babylonian Marriage Market? In old Babylon all marriageable women were sent up to auction, and the sum paid for the pretty ones went as dower for

those who were ugly. Thus was a balance preserved. I suspect it is much the same in life. There is equilibrium where we least expect it. The peacock has a gorgeous plumage and a horrible voice, the nightingale the sweetest song and the plainest feathers. Some of our most radiant flowers are without perfume, and some that smell odoriferously have little in the way of beauty to boast of. When I was in the aristocratic world, I had my luxuries, intellectual, æsthetic, and physical, but, somehow, I lacked that joyousness I am finding here. In the middle class there is a freedom from the restraints which cramped us in the class above, and I have no doubt that there is an *abandon*, an *insouciance* in the class below which makes up for the deficiency in the amenities, refinements, and glow of life in higher spheres. There is a making up of the balance, an adjustment of the equilibrium in the market-place of modern life as in that of ancient Babylon. Those with rank and wealth have to walk with muffled faces, only the plain and lowly may breathe freely and let the sun kiss their cheeks."

"Miss Inglett, I am sure, notwithstanding your efforts to make me think the contrary, that you are not happy."

"I tell you that I am. I say this in all sincerity. I do not deny that I feel a heartache. That is because my conscience reproaches me, and because I now love and regret what I once cast from me. If I had not been born elsewhere I should be fresh and happy now, but every plant suffers for a while when transplanted. I am throwing out my rootlets and fastening myself into the new soil, and will soon be firm fixed in it as if I had grown there from the beginning—my only trouble that I have dreams of the past. A princess was once carried off by Rübezahl, giant spirit of the mountains, to his palace of crystal in the heart of the earth. He gave her all she could wish for, save one thing, the sound of the cattle bells on the Alpine pastures. His home was too far down for those sounds to reach. Whenever we are

carried away from our home, we must always carry away with us some recollections of pleasant sounds and sights, and they linger with us as memories over which to weep. But there—we have had enough about myself—nay, too much. I want to hear what you are about, and what are your prospects.”

“I am in search of occupation, and have, so far, met only with disappointment.”

“You have been anxious. You are not looking well.”

“Naturally, I am anxious. I, like you, have the weight of the past oppressing me. Unlike you, I have not accommodated myself to my transplantation, but—in fact, I have not yet found soil in which my roots may take hold.”

“What soil do you want?”

“Any. There is a demand, I am told, for muscle ; the market is glutted with brain, or what passes for brain. As there is a deficiency in the supply of cooks, I will mount a white cap and apron and apply for a kitchen. But, seriously, apart from my affairs, which can wait, yours must be attended to.”

“But nothing can be done. You propose nothing. I can suggest nothing.”

Then in came Mrs. Welsh and Mrs. Saltren. The former was carrying the baby.

“It is all settled,” said Tryphœna Welsh. “Rejoice with me, Miss Inglett. I did want a cook, one not given to climbing ladders, and now I have got one ; now James will swear, for he has been spoiled by your cookery, Miss Inglett ; at last I have got a cook, the girl Thomasine Kite. Come, kiss the baby and thank Heaven.”

CHAPTER XLVIII.

L'ALLEMANDE.

"WHY, blessings on me!" exclaimed Mrs. Saltren, on her return to the lodgings in Bloomsbury. "Whoever expected the pleasure! And—I am sorry that you should see us here, Captain Tubb; not settled into our West-End house. Me and my son are looking about for a suitable residence, genteel and commodious, and with a W. to the address; but there is that run on the West End, and it is almost impossible, without interest, to get a house. My brother, however, who is like to be an M.P., is using his influence. But, captain, you see that every house won't suit me; I'm not going to be in the shade any more. Well, it is a pleasure to see an Orleigh face here; and, pray, what has brought you to town, Captain Tubb?"

The visitor was in a black suit, that obtained for his son's funeral; he held his hat in one hand, with a broad black cloth band about it. With his disengaged hand he thrust up his beard and nibbled the ends.

Ladies play with their fans, coquette with them, talk with them, angle with them; and an uninitiated person looking on wonders what is the meaning of the many movements made with the fan—the unfurling, the snapping, the half-opening. Perhaps Captain Tubb may have been coquetting, talking with his hat, for he turned it about, then looked

into it, then smoothed it where it was ruffled, then put it under his chair, then took it up and balanced it on his knee. I cannot tell. If he was not speaking with his hat, what else could he have meant by all the movements he went through with it?

"Well, ma'am," said the captain; "seeing as how I was in London, I thought I'd come and inquire how you was getting along. How are you? And how is Mr. Jingles?"

"I, myself, am but middling," answered Mrs. Saltren, with stateliness. "My son—Mr. Giles Inglett Saltren—is very well indeed. I have gone through a great deal of trouble, and that takes it out of one," said Mrs. Saltren, "like spirits of nitre."

"So it do, ma'am. There is a vale of misery; but the sale of Chillacot was an elevation in the same; and bank-notes are of that spongy nature that they sop up a lot o' tears. How, if I may make so bold as to ask, is your son thinking of investing the money? You see, ma'am, poor Captain Saltren and I knowed each other that intimate, our lines o' business running alongside of each other, that we was always a-hailing of each other. And now that he's gone, it seems natural for me to come and consult with his relict."

"You're flattering, Mr. Tubb. I must say, it is a pity my poor Stephen did not oftener consult me. If he had—but there, I won't say what I might. About Chillacot, he was that pig-headed that—but no, not another word. I've always heard say that the wife is the better half. What a mercy it is, and how it proves the wisdom of Providence, that the wusser half was took away first."

"You don't know, Mrs. Saltren, how dreadful you're missed in Orleigh; the place don't seem the same without you. And folks say such spiteful things too."

"As what, captain?"

"As that, having sold Chillacot, you ought to spend the

purchase money there, and not be throwing it about in town."

"Do they now? But I'm not throwing it about; it is all in the bank."

"I reckon Mr. Jingles—I mean your son, ma'am—has it there in his own name."

"Not at all, cap'n. The money is mine."

Captain Tubb whisked round the brim of his hat with both hands.

"There have been changes since you've gone," he said. "For one, there is old Sam Ceely married."

"Sam Ceely!" echoed Mrs. Saltren, and dropped her hands in her lap.

"It does seem almost wicked for a man at his time of life and crippled. But he and Joan Melhuish have been keeping company a long time, and now he has come in for some money. I hope," said the captain, "that the childer, if there come any, mayn't come into this world with half their fingers blowed off through poaching, and a bad life through drunkenness."

Mrs. Saltren said nothing.

"There's another thing," pursued Captain Tubb. "The new quarry is running out, and we're thinking of reopening the old one."

"What—that which is full of water? It is worked out."

"Oh, no! there is more lime if more head be taken off; but there can be nothing done till the water is pumped out."

"You are thinking of pumping the quarry dry?"

"Yes, ma'am; with a water-wheel it could be cleared. I've talked the matter with Mr. Macduff and the trustees, and they are content to let me have the quarry rent free for five years, if I will put up the proper machinery to get out the water."

"The expense will be very heavy."

Captain Tubb stroked his beard, and put the ends into his mouth ; then, after consideration he admitted—

“ Well, it will cost money.”

“ And are you really going to sink money in pumping out water ? ”

“ Consider, Mrs. Saltren, that I shall have the working of the quarry for no rent at all during five years.”

“ And you think it worth the outlay ? ”

“ Seven per cent. guaranteed.”

“ My son says that all I can expect to get for my capital if invested is five per cent.”

“ I dare say, in town. At Orleigh, seven.”

Neither spoke for some time ; Captain Tubb continued to play alternately with his beard and his hat ; and Mrs. Saltren looked on the floor, then furtively at her visitor.

Presently the widow asked, “ What will you take ? Bottled stout or spirits and water ? ”

“ Thank you, whichever you drink.”

“ I drink neither,” answered Mrs. Saltren, drawing herself up. “ I taste nothing but tea and water ; but when an old friend comes and sees me, I make an exception. I have some whisky in the sideboard—Giles suffers in his inside, and I’m obliged to keep it by me against his attacks. If you will allow me I will get it out.”

She rang for water and tumblers, and produced the spirits and sugar.

“ Now tell me some further news of Orleigh,” she said, as she stirred a glass.

“ There has been the cottage of Patience Kite done up again,” said he, “ and she has gone back into it, which is unfortunate, for it would have suited me if I work the old quarry.”

“ But surely it would not be large enough for you, cap’n.”

He shook his head. He had finished his glass, and now abstractedly he half filled it with water.

"Since poor Arkie died, I'm very lonely. It is fifteen years since I buried my wife. I feel as lonely as does this drop o' water in the tumbler, without spirits to qualify it."

Mrs. Saltren pushed the whisky bottle towards him.

"Mix to your liking, captain," she said.

In old English country dances there is a figure known by the name of *l'allemande*, which consists of a couple dancing round each other, back to back, after which they join hands and dance down the middle. The *allemande* lingers on in Sir Roger de Coverley, but is never performed in polite society. It survives in full force in country courtships.

We who live in the midst of artificiality of all kinds in our time of roses sigh for the unchecked liberty of the rustic swain and his milkmaid, and kick at the little etiquettes which restrain us within the limits of decorum. But, as a matter of fact, the love-making below stairs is oblique, prosaic, and of a back-to-back description, full of restraints and shynesses, of setting to partners, and *allemanding* about them. From the contemplation of pastoral pictures in red crayon on our Queen Anne walls, we carry away the notion that country love-making is direct, idyllic, and flowery. It is nothing of the sort. Come, follow the *allemanding* of this mature pair.

"I've not yet been to Brighton and seen the Aquarium," said Mrs. Saltren. "Have you, Captain Tubb?"

"Can't say I have, ma'am. It's lone work going by oneself to see fishes."

"So have I thought," said the widow. "And for that reason I've not been."

"It is a wonderful consideration," said the captain, "how fond cats are of fish; and how ill the skin and bones of a salt herring do make a cat! For myself, I like trout."

"Well, so do I!" said the widow. "They're fresher than salt-water fish, as stands to reason."

"The old lord put trout into the quarry-pond," said Tubb.

"So I've heard ; and Saltren told me they were monstrous fat and large."

"There is no catching them," observed the captain ; "the water is clear, and they are wary. If ever I pump the pond dry, ma'am, you shall have a dish."

"Trout should be eaten when they are just out of the water," said Mrs. Saltren ; "they lose their flavour when a day old. I suppose it will not be possible for me to have them trout you so kindly offer the same day they are ketched."

"Not possible if you are in London," answered the captain. "Perhaps you'd best come to Orleigh to eat 'em."

Then ensued a silence, broken at last by Mrs. Saltren, who remarked, with a sigh—

"There'll be no eating of them trout till the pump is got."

"That is true," sighed Tubb. "But then the money is sure to be raised wherewith to put up the water-wheel and pump. Just consider, ma'am, seven per cent. You've not thought of investing, have you, what you got by the sale of Chillacot ?"

This was a direct question, and the captain was scared at his temerity in putting it. He ate a whole mouthful of his beard.

"'A fool and her money are soon parted,' says the proverb," answered Mrs. Saltren. "Consequently, I don't think I'll let my money go anywhere without me."

Captain Tubb drew his chair closer ; and, instead of settling the matter at once, began a fresh *allemand*.

"What do you think of mutton here in London ?"

"I don't relish it ; and it is awfully dear, so is beef. Elevenpence and a shilling for what at Orleigh cost eightpence and ninepence. What fortunes them butchers must be making !"

"It seems a sin to encourage them," said Tubb.

"It does go against my conscience," agreed Mrs. Saltren.

"Then," argued the captain, "I wouldn't encourage them. Twopence and threepence in the pound is too much."

"I've a mind to return to the country," said Mrs. Saltren ; "I don't want to encourage such wickedness."

"And then, ma'am, you can eat the trout fresh."

"Ah, captain ! but the capital for pumping ?"

Then Captain Tubb cautiously slid one arm round Mrs. Saltren's waist, and said—

"Come, Marianne, with your capital, away from the mutton of town to the trout of the country."

"I should like 'em fresh," said the widow. "We'll pump together for them."

The youthful romance-reader expects of a novel some love-making, and, to satisfy this reader, I have given this pathetic and romantic scene in full. To this sort of reader, style is nothing, characterisation is nothing, the grammar is nothing—indeed the whole story is nothing if there be in it no love-making.

That is the spice which flavours the dish, and without it the dish is rejected as unpalatable.

To encourage this reader, accordingly, at the outset a chapter was devoted to love-making in tandem, and another to love-making abreast. Only one of those love-affairs has come to a happy conclusion ; one was broken off by the breaking-down of Patience Kite's chimney. To make up to the reader for her disappointment, I have inserted this other love-scene, and have introduced it near the end of my book to stimulate the jaded appetite to finish it.

Is it false to nature ? Only those will say so who are ignorant of country courtships. Oh, for a Dionysian ear through which to listen to—not the sighs of prisoners, but the coo

of turtle-doves ! Now it so fell out that the writer of these lines was himself, on one occasion, an eye-and-ear witness to the wooing of a rustic couple—involuntarily. It came about in this way.

When I was a boy, on a Sunday, I had set a trap to catch rats that scared the scullery-maid in the back kitchen, and caused her to drop my mother's best china. But as rat-catching was not considered by my parents a Sabbatical amusement, I set my traps on the sly when they were at church on Sunday afternoon, and I was at home with a cold. The housemaid was left in charge, and naturally admitted her lover to assist her in watching after the safety of the house. Both seated themselves in the kitchen, one in the settle, the other in a chair before the fire. When I, in the back kitchen, heard them enter, I was afraid to stir lest my parents should be informed of my proceedings, and the sanctity of the Sabbath be impressed tinglingly on me, across my father's knee, with the back of a hair-brush, a paper-knife, or a slipper. Accordingly I kept still.

Twenty minutes elapsed, and no words having passed I stole to the kitchen door and peeped through. The maid sat on the settle, the swain on the chair, unctuously ogling each other in silence.

After the lapse of twenty minutes by the clock, the youth lifted up his voice and said solemnly, " Mary, what be that there thing for ? " and he pointed to a button above the kitchen range.

" That, Joshua, is the damper."

Again silence fell over the kitchen, only broken by the ticking of the clock. After the expiration of twenty minutes more, the youth further inquired, " And what be the damper for, Mary ? "

" For to make the fire go a smother-like, Joshua," she replied.

Again twenty minutes elapsed : then I heard a long-

drawn sigh, and Joshua said in a grave, emotionless voice, "Mary, there be no damper in my buzzom."

"There come master and mistress from church," exclaimed Mary; "Joshua, you must go."

"Lord!" said the swain, slowly rising, "how I have enjoyed myself, Mary."

Next Sunday the banns were called.

This was slow allemanding indeed, quite at the cinquepace, but then it was the love-making of an inexperienced youthful couple. Marianne Saltren and Captain Tubb had gone through the process, at least, once previously, so that there was not the same shyness and stiffness in their courtship. Nevertheless they conformed to the rule of country courtship, and allemanded about each other, though, I grant you, at a sprightlier pace than that of Joshua and Mary, before they joined hands and went down the middle.

CHAPTER XLIX.

TWO ORLEIGH GIRLS.

MRS. WELSH burst in on Arminell one evening just before dinner with a face of dismay, and both her hands uplifted.

"Mercy on us! What do you think?"

Arminell stood up. "What has happened, Mrs. Welsh?" she asked in some alarm.

"My dear! You might have knocked me down with a feather. I thought that the girl would be sure to know how to do boiled rabbit with onion sauce."

"Does she not?"

"And there was to be a Swiss pudding."

"That, probably, she would not know how to make, but she can read, and has Mrs. Warne to fly to for light."

"I put out the currant jelly for the pudding, and she has spread it over the rabbit on top of the onion sauce."

Arminell was unable to restrain a laugh.

"I went down to see her dish up, and that is what she has done. Poured the onion sauce over the rabbit, and heaped the currant jelly a top of that. Whatever shall we do? The last cook was bad enough, but she did not spoil good food."

"What induced her to do this?"

"She says that she has been told to put currant jelly with hare, and so she has put it with rabbit, as she saw the jelly-pot set out on the the kitchen table for the pudding."

"And the pudding?"

"Is without anything. We cannot eat the rabbit. That is spoiled; and the pudding is nothing without red currant jelly. Whatever will Mr. Welsh do for his dinner?"

"But the girl had Mrs. Warne's Cookery Book on the table for reference."

"Yes, but she also had a sensational novel."

Arminell laughed again. "I am afraid the education she has received has garnished her head much in the same fashion as she has garnished the rabbit, several good things jumbled together, making an unpalatable whole. I will go and see what can be done."

"I have given the girl notice."

"Surely not, Mrs. Welsh. She has but just come to town."

"I spoke sharply to her, and girls now-a-days will not bear a word. She flew out at me and said she would not remain another hour in the house. Girls give themselves such airs. She knows my extremity, how long I have been without a cook."

Arminell descended to the kitchen, but Thomasine was not there. The boiled rabbit stood on the table crowned with onion sauce and crimson jelly. Near it lay, wide open, a book, not so thick as Mrs. Warne's Cookery Manual, and Arminell stooped to look at it. The book was Gaboriau's 'Gilded Clique,' much stained and cockled, as if it had been wet through, and then dried. Arminell turned it over; it was her own copy, which she had flung from her when in the Owl's Nest, to arouse and arrest the attention of Captain Saltren. She could not doubt that it was the identical book, for her name was pencilled on it, and the water had not effaced the pencil scrawl. She did not know, what was the fact, that the book had undergone two immersions, and had twice been recovered by Patience, and that on the last occasion she had passed it on to her daughter.

Arminell stood turning over the disfigured volume, speculating on how it had come into Thomasine's hands, and thinking of the occasion when she had last read it ; and so thinking, for a moment she forgot the rabbit with its incongruous garnishment, and why she had descended to the kitchen. She was roused from her reverie by the maid-of-all-work coming in excitedly.

"Oh my, miss ! What do you think ? Thomasine has flown out at missus, and packed up her things in a bundle, and gone."

"Thomasine gone !"

"Lawk, miss ! She wouldn't stand no nonsense, she said ; and if the missus didn't like her cooking she might cook for herself. She wouldn't stay. Thomasine had a flaming temper ; it's the way of them red-headed girls."

"Thomasine gone !"

"Gone in a tantrum, her cheeks as red as her head. I can't think what folks find to admire in her hair. It is thick and red. I don't fancy carrots."

"But whither is she gone ? She is a stranger in London, and has no friends."

"I don't suppose, miss, she knows herself."

"Has she gone back to Mrs. Saltren ?"

"I don't fancy so. She was in such a rage, she thought of nothing but going, and never even asked for her wage."

"Do you know in which direction she went ?"

"No, I was not on the look-out. She came flaring on me to give me good-bye, and away she went. She said that as the missus had insulted her, go she would to where she would be valued."

"Have you no idea where she is gone ?"

"I don't know." The girl hesitated, then said, "Thomasine said as how there was a gentleman at the hotel where Mrs. Saltren first was who admired her and said she ought never to demean herself to go into service—I can't say, she has

spoken of him once or twice, and I fancy he came to look for her when she was at the lodgings with Mrs. Saltren—she may have gone to ask his advice what to do and where to go.”

“That is enough,” said Arminell, and ran upstairs, put on her bonnet, and hastened into the street. She was doubtful in which direction to turn, but seeing the postman coming with the letters, she asked him if he had observed a girl with red hair.

“What, the new cook at Mrs. Welsh’s, miss? Oh, yes, she has gone by with a bundle. Very ’ansome girl, that.”

Arminell went down the Avenue, and at the corner encountered a policeman on duty. She asked him the same question. He also had noticed Thomasine. Indeed he knew her. Her splendid build, her profusion of glowing hair, and beautiful complexion were a phenomenon in Shepherd’s Bush, and all the milkmen, butchers’ boys, postmen, police, knew and admired her, though she had been in the house of Mrs. Welsh but a fortnight.

“Yes, miss, she’s gone down that way—has a bundle in her hand. I asked her whither she was going and she said she was leaving her situation because her mistress was impudent to her. Wery ’ansome gall, that.”

Arminell went on to a cabstand; she was near the Hammersmith Station. As a disengaged flyman hailed her, she asked him if he had seen a young woman go by carrying a bundle.

“A ’ansome gal with red hair? To be sure. ’Ailed her, but she said she’d take a ’bus.”

Take a ’bus!—she had gone on to that great centre of radiating streets and roads a few steps ahead. Arminell quickened her pace, almost ran, and reached the main artery of traffic between the City and Hammersmith through Kensington. She had a sharp eye, and in a moment saw Thomasine, who was mounting an omnibus. She ran, as the horses started—ran, regardless of what any one might

think, but could not overtake the 'bus. She signed to the driver of a passing empty cab.

"Keep up with the Hammersmith omnibus," she said, panting. "When it stops, set me down. Here is a shilling." She sprang in, and speedily caught up the scarlet-bodied conveyance, descended from the cab, entered the omnibus, and seated herself beside Thomasine.

She was out of breath, the perspiration ran off her brow, and her heart beat fast. She could not speak, but she laid her hand on that of the girl which rested on the bundle, and the action said, "I have taken you in charge."

She was beside Thomasine, and could not see her face; she did not attempt to look at her, but kept her hand where she had laid it, till the omnibus halted at Broad Walk in front of Kensington Palace; by this time she had recovered her breath sufficiently to bid the conductor let her out. She rose hastily, still holding Thomasine, who did not stir.

"Come," said Arminell, "come with me," and looked the girl straight in the eyes.

Thomasine's hand quivered under that of Arminell, and her face flushed. She dropped her eyes and rose. In another moment they were together on the pavement.

"We will walk together," said Miss Inglett, "up the broad avenue. I want to speak to you. I want to know why you are running away, and whither you are going?"

"Please, miss," answered the girl, "I ain't going to be spoken to by Mrs. Welsh. Her's nothing, nor old Welsh neither. He is the brother of Marianne Saltren, and no better than me or my mother. They may set up to be gentlefolk and giye themselves airs, but they are only common people like myself."

"You have made a mistake, Thomasine. You should not have put the currant jelly over the boiled rabbit. Those who make mistakes must have them corrected.

How would you like to have your pretty velvet bonnet spoiled by Mrs. Welsh spilling ink over it?"

"I should be angry."

"Well, it is the same case. You have spoiled the nice dinner she had provided for Mr. Welsh."

"Welsh is nothing. His father was an old Methody shopkeeper who ran away, having cheated a lot of folk out of their money. I know all about the Welshes. I'm not going to stand cheek from them."

"But you will listen to a word from me."

"Oh, miss, you are different. I wouldn't be impudent to you for anything. But it is other with them stuck-ups as are no better than myself."

"You will not try to twist yourself away from me?"

"No, miss."

"I want you to tell me, Thomasine, whither you were running? Were you going to Mrs. Saltren?"

"Mrs. Saltren!" scoffed the girl. "She is nothing. Marianne Saltren, the daughter of the canting old cheat, and widow of a mining captain. I won't be servant to her. Not I."

"Whither were you going, then?"

Thomasine was silent.

Arminell walked at her side; she had let go the girl's hand.

"I ran after you," said Arminell.

"Was that what made you so hot and out of breath, miss?"

"Yes, I was frightened when I heard that you had gone away."

"What was there to frighten you? I had not taken any spoons."

"I never supposed that for a moment. I was alarmed about yourself."

"I can take care of myself. I am old enough."

"I am not sure that you can take care of yourself. Thomasine, you and I come from the same place, dear

Orleigh, and it is such a pleasure to me to see you, and hear you talk. When I found that you were gone, I thought what shall I do without my dear Tamsine to talk with about the old place I love so much?"

"Why don't you go back to it, miss, if you like it?" asked the girl.

"Because I cannot. Come closer to me." Arminell caught the girl's hand again. "I also ran away. I ran away, as you are running away now. That has brought upon me great sorrow and bitter self-reproach, and I would save you from doing the same thing that I have done, and from the repentance that comes too late."

"They said at Orleigh, miss, that you were dead."

"I am dead to Orleigh and all I love there. Why did you come to town with Mrs. Saltren, if you do not care to be with her?"

"Because I wanted to see the world, but I had no intention of remaining with her."

"Then what did you intend?"

Thomasine shrugged her shoulders. "I wanted to see life, and have some fun, and know what London was like. I don't want to slave here as I slaved in a farm."

"You came to town restless and discontented, so did I; and now I would give everything I have to be set back where I was. You came in the same spirit, and I have stopped you on the threshold of a grave disaster, and perhaps saved you from unutterable misery. Thomasine, dear Thomasine, tell me the truth. Were you going to that hotel where some one flattered your vanity and held out to you prospects of idleness? You were leaving hard work and the duties that fell to your lot where God placed you, because impatient of restraint. You had learned the one lesson that is taught in all schools to boys and girls alike—hatred of honest work. Tamsine, you must return with me."

The girl pouted. Arminell, looking round, saw the curl in her lip.

"I don't care to be under the Welshes," said the girl; "nor Marianne Saltren, neither. They ain't better than me, and why shouldn't I be as stylish as they?"

"If you resent being with them, be with me. Be my maid. I am not going to remain in Shepherd's Bush. I intend to take a house somewhere in the country—somewhere where I can be useful, and, Tamsine, find work, hard work that I can do for others. That is what I seek now for myself. Will you come with me? Then we two Orleigh girls will be together, that will be charming."

Thomasine turned and looked wonderingly at Miss Inglett. We two Orleigh girls! We—the baron's daughter and the wise woman's bastard.

"I'd like my frolic first," said Thomasine.

"After that—I could not receive you," answered Arminell gravely.

"I don't see," said Thomasine, still pouting, but uneasy and undecided, with the colour flying in flakes over her face and showing through the transparent complexion. "I don't see why we are to be always kept at work, and not be allowed to amuse ourselves. We aren't young for long."

"Tamsine," said Arminell, "poor Arkie Tubbs sat by you when your mother's cottage was being pulled down, and when you thought that she was in danger, and you could not run to her aid yourself, because you had turned your ankle, you sent him. You sent him to his death. The chimney fell and buried him. If he had considered himself he would not have risked his life for your mother. We all honour him for what he did. He never was clever and sharp in life, he failed in everything he undertook, he even failed then, for he did not bring your mother out of the ruin, he was buried in it himself. But he was a hero in his

death because he sacrificed himself for others—for you, because he loved you, and for your mother.”

Thomasine said nothing, but her hand twitched in that of Arminell.

“You must be worthy of him, remain worthy of him. Thomasine, if you follow your own self-will and passion for pleasure, people will say it was well that Arkie Tubb died, she was not deserving of him.”

They had reached the head of the Broad Walk, and issued from Kensington Park into Uxbridge Road. The stream of traffic flowed east and west, east to the City, west to Shepherd’s Bush, past them, and they stood watching the two currents. Thomasine withdrew her hand.

Arminell was certain that this was a critical moment in the girl’s heart. She said nothing more. She had said enough, she waited. Thomasine turned her face east, and took a step in that direction with a red flush in her cheek. Then the red flush rose to her brow and deserted her cheek, and she turned back.

Presently she said, “May I take your hand again, miss?”

Arminell readily gave it.

Then Thomasine strode to the west, holding Arminell. She seemed fearful of herself if left to herself, but confident whilst holding the hand of Arminell. The good angel had conquered, and that good angel was the thought of poor, blundering, kindly, stupid Arkie Tubb.

Is ever a life utterly thrown away? It had seemed so when the stones crushed the soul out of that lad. A profitless life had ended unprofitably. But see! Here at the end of Broad Walk, Kensington, that cast-away life was the saving of the girl whom he had loved unprofitably.

CHAPTER L.

A RAZOR TO CUT CABBAGES.

AN old man told me one day that he had spent fifty years of his life in making a concordance of the Bible—he had never heard of Cruden's work. The labour of fifty years thrown away! I know another who sank all his savings in publishing a Law Compendium he had compiled, and when it was published sold two copies.

Jingles was going through a heart-breaking experience. He was discovering that all he had acquired in school and university was a disadvantage to him in the position in which he now found himself.

He had been well educated, had been polished and sharpened; but the money spent on his education might as well have been thrown into the sea, and the time devoted to learning have been as profitably given up to billiards.

This would not have been the case had Giles Inglett Saltren been able to enter a learned profession, but as this was out of the question, his education was profitless. He had been qualified to take his place in a social class in which he was no more able to show himself.

One day Jingles had given his razor to a boy to sharpen for him. The lad took it to a grindstone and put an edge to the back. "Please, sir," said the fellow when reprimanded, "the front was middling sharp, so I thought

I'd put an edge to the back." Jingles remembered this incident now with some bitterness. He had been sharpened on the wrong side for cutting his way. He was a classic scholar, knew his *Æschylus* and *Euripides*, and could write elegant Latin verses. He was disciplined in the manners and habits of the upper class. But he knew little of modern languages, and his working out of a sum in compound addition left much to be desired.

At first he looked out for such a situation as would suit him, but speedily discovered that what he must find was a situation which he would suit.

A librarianship, a secretaryship, lastly a tutorship, commended themselves to him as situations for which he was qualified; but such situations are few, and the applicants are legion.

The paralytic in the Gospel was always wanting to be let down into Siloam after the troubling of the water, but invariably found that some one else had stepped in whilst he was being carried, or was laboriously dragging himself to the brink. It was so with Jingles. When he did hear of a vacancy that would suit him, and made application for it, it was to find that another had stepped in before him.

He tried for private pupils. He was ready to attend any house and teach during the day. He would prefer that to being again taken into a family as a resident tutor, but he was not even as successful as *Nicholas Nickleby*. There were no little Miss Kenwigses to be taught.

He had a difficulty about giving references. He could not mention Lady Lamerton, and invite inquiries concerning him of the family at Orleigh Park. At first he was reluctant to apply to his uncle for a testimonial, or for leave to use his name, but when he found that his way was blocked through lack of references, he swallowed his pride and asked the requisite permission of Mr. Welsh. The leave was granted, and conducted to nothing.

If pride could have fattened, about this time, Jingles ought to have grown plump, he swallowed so much of it ; but it was like blackbeetles to a cat—it made him grow lanker.

He spent a good deal of money in advertising in the daily papers, but got no answers. Then he took to answering advertisements, and met with no better success. Then he applied to agents, paid fees, and got no further. It was to the advantage of these go-betweens to put bad men in good posts, and thrust good men into bad posts, to plant square men into round holes, and round men in square holes.

Every change brought an additional fee, and naturally this consideration had its influence on the agents.

There was a whole class of middle schools conducted by speculative men without education themselves, for the sons of tradesmen and farmers, where the teaching given was of the worst description, and the moral supervision was of the most inefficient quality. The ushers in these were Germans, Swiss, and French, men out of pocket and out at elbows, picking up a wretched subsistence, and eating as their daily diet humble-pie. The doors of these “Academies for Young Gentlemen” were closed to Saltren because he was an University man and a scholar. He was dangerous, he knew too much, and might expose the hollowness of these swindles.

Convinced at length that there was no hope of his getting any place such as he would like, in which his acquirements would avail, Jingles turned to commercial life. But here also he found that his education stood in the way. He went to Mincing Lane in quest of a clerkship in one of the great tea, rice, sugar, and spice firms ; but there an accountant and not a logician was wanted.

Next he visited Mark Lane and sought admission into one of the great corn-factors’ offices. He was too raw for

these men ; what were wanted in such houses as these in Mark and Mincing Lanes were sharp lads of from seventeen to nineteen, trained at Board Schools, who could reckon rapidly, and were not above being sent messages ; lads who would be filed into business shape, who were disciplinable to take a special line, not young men educated already and with their heads stuffed with matter utterly useless for business.

In a state of discouragement Jingles next visited Lloyds. There it was the same. What did he want ? To become an underwriter ! Well and good, let him deposit five thousand pounds and find a clerk at two hundred, with five per cent. on all transactions, till he had himself thoroughly mastered the system of underwriting. He could not afford this. He must be taken on as clerk. Where ? At Lloyds, or at one of the Marine Insurance offices that has its base at Lloyds. What did he know of the work ? The clerk has to go round with policies to be initialed, and when the books return to the office after four o'clock, he has to make them up. What did he understand about the value of cargoes and the risks run ? There was no place for him in a Marine Insurance. Some one recommended him to try stockbroking.

Like a greenhorn, as he was, Jingles made at once for the Exchange, and, passing the porters, entered the House. The vast space was crowded. The din bewildered him. He heard names shouted from the telegraph offices, the call of porters, the voices of the stock-jobbers raised in dispute or argument. All at once an exclamation, "Seventeen hundred."¹ Then ensued a gravitation towards himself, and in a moment his hat was knocked over his eyes, then he was thrust, elbowed, jostled from side to side.

When he recovered his sight, his hat was snatched from

¹ This was the original number on Exchange, and the call is one to attract attention to an unwarranted intrusion.

his hand and flung across the House. Next, his umbrella was wrenched from him, and with it he was struck over the back.

"You have no right in here, sir," said a porter.

"Don't mind him," shouted a dozen around. "We are heartily glad to make your acquaintance."

The horseplay was resumed, and as the young man's blood rose, and he resented the treatment, and showed fight, he was still more roughly handled, and finally found himself kicked and hustled out of the Exchange.

Giles Saltren stood on the step without, minus a hat and umbrella, and with his coat split down the back—his best coat put on to produce a good impression on employers—stood dazed and humbled, an object of derision to match-boys and flower-girls, who danced about him, with words and antics of mockery.

Presently an old white-haired stockbroker, who came out of the Exchange, noticed him, and stopped and spoke to him, and bade him not be angry. What had occurred was due to his having intruded where he had no right to be. Jingles answered that he had gone there because he was in quest of employment, whereupon he was told he might just as well have jumped into the Thames because he desired engagement on a penny steamer.

"Young gentleman," said the broker, "it is of no use your looking for employment in our line of business. We have a Clerks' Provident Fund, to which every clerk out of employ subscribes; and if a broker wants a man at forty, sixty, a hundred, two hundred pounds, he applies to the secretary of the Provident Fund, who furnishes him with the man he wants out of the number of those then disengaged. You have no experience, or you would not have ventured into the House. If I want an errand boy, I take on the son of a clerk. You have, I fear, no connexions in the line to speak a word for you! You have been to the University, do you say?"

The broker whistled.

"My good sir, I do not recommend you to waste time in applying at stockbrokers' offices; you are likely to make acquaintance with the outside only of their office doors. There is more chance for the son of a bed-maker or a chimney-sweep than for you."

Giles Saltren next sought admission into a bank, but found that this was a business even more close than that of stock-jobbing. The banking business was like the sleeping Brynhild, surrounded by a *waberlohe*, a wall of flame; and he was no Siegfried to spur his horse through the ring of fire.

Having discovered how futile were his attempts to enter a bank, he turned to the docks, in hopes of getting a situation in a shipping-office, only there also to meet with rebuff.

Then he saw an advertisement from a West-End shop-keeper, one of those giants of trade, who has an universal store. There was a vacancy in the stocking department for a young man. Applicants were to appear personally at a fixed hour on Friday next.

Giles Inglett hesitated before he could resolve to offer himself as a counter-jumper, and acquire the "What can we serve you next with, ma'am?" To descend to the counter from the Oxford schools was a great descent; but Jingles was like a vessel in stress of weather, throwing overboard all her lading. Away must go his Greek, his Latin, his logic, his position as an University scholar, that of a gentleman, his self-esteem, certainly, his self-respect to some extent, his ambition altogether.

But why not? He was not born to be a gentleman; it was by a happy accident that he had been given an education that furnished him with most accomplishments which adorn a man of birth and standing. He must remember that he was not entitled by his parentage to anything above a shopman's place, and must gulp down this junk of pride.

On the appointed day Saltren went to Westbourne Grove, and found that he was but one of between three or four hundred young men, applicants for the vacancy behind the stocking counter. His appearance, delicate and refined, the diffidence with which he spoke, were against him, and he found himself at once and decisively rejected, and a vulgar young fellow at his side, full of self-conceit, was chosen instead.

Saltren made application in other offices, but always without success: his ignorance of shorthand was against him. In the offices of solicitors it is indispensable that shorthand be practised by the clerks. It facilitates and expedites the dictation of letters.

So also, had he been a proficient in shorthand, he might have obtained work as a reporter at meetings. But to his grief he discovered that all the education he had received which tended to broaden the mind was valueless, that only was profitable which contracted the intellect. Saltren, moreover, was speedily given to understand that unless he went in search of a situation with gold in his hand, he could get nothing. With capital, his intellectual culture would be graciously overlooked and excused. His university education was such a drawback, that it could only be forgiven if he put money into the concern where he proposed to enter.

Saltren had come to the end of his own resources, and he saw that without capital he could get admission nowhere. He could not obtain a clerkship in any kind of business; the sole chance of entering a commercial life was to become a partner in one.

There was abundance of advertisements for partners in the daily papers, but nearly all the businesses, when examined, proved unsatisfactory, and the risk of losing all too great. Giles Saltren had, indeed, no capital of his own; but he resolved, should he see a chance of making an investment that was safe, and one which would give him work

in a partnership, to propose to his mother that she should in this manner dispose of the purchase-money for Chillacot. She would derive from it an annual sum as interest, and have the satisfaction as well of knowing that she had found employment for her son.

At last he found what he sought, and sanguine as to the results, he came to his mother's lodgings to make the proposal to her.

"Please, Mr. Saltren," said the landlady; "your mother has gone out with the admiral."

"The admiral?"

"Ah, the admiral, sir!" said the landlady, with a knowing smile. "You don't mean to say, Mr. Saltren, that your mother hasn't told you? and a beautiful breakfast spread, and a cake with a cupid at top all made of sugar."

"But what admiral? we know no admiral!"

"What, not Admiral Tubb? Well now, Mr. Saltren, who would have thought your mother would have been so sly as not to have told you that she was going to give you a new pa?"

"Upon my word, I do not understand you."

"Then, Mr. Saltren, you come along with me, and see the breakfast laid in the dining-room, and the beautiful wedding-cake all over orange-flowers. It does seem sharp work too, when your father died so very recently; but if widows don't seize the moments as they fly, and take admirals by the forelock, they may be left in their weeds till it is too late. Why, bless me, Mr. Saltren, here they come!"

"But," persisted Jingles, much astonished, and almost persuaded that Mrs. Bankes, the lodging-house-keeper, had gone off her head, "what admiral?"

"Admiral Tubb, sir, R.N. Your mother told me so. There they are. Lawk, sir! he in lavender don't-mention-ems and yaller gloves; and she is in a beautiful Brussels

veil that must have cost ten pounds, and the cabby wearing of a favour."

Into the house sailed Mrs. Saltren—Saltren no more, but Tubb—with a long white veil over her head, and orange-blossoms in her hand, wearing a grey silk gown. Captain Tubb advanced with her on his arm, and looked red and sheepish.

"My child," said Marianne, "come and salute your new father. This distinguished officer—I mean," she hesitated and corrected herself, "Bartholomew Tubb has prevailed on me to lay aside my widow's cap for the bridal-veil. And, oh! my Giles, you will be pleased to hear that the capital I got through the sale of Chillacot is to be sunk in the old quarry, and me and the admiral—I mean Tubb—are going to join hands and pump the water out."

CHAPTER LI

A PATCH OF BLUE SKY.

ABOUT the same time that Jingles was situation-hunting, Arminell was engaged in house-hunting. She had made up her mind to take a cottage on the south coast. Mrs. Welsh had, at length, got a cook who did passably. She had fits occasionally and frothed at the mouth ; she also kicked out with her legs convulsively on these occasions and kicked over every little table near her, regardless of what was on it—a glass custard-dish, a sugar-bowl, or, indeed, anything smashable. However, between her fits she was a good plain cook, and the fits did not come on every day. When they did, Mrs. Welsh telegraphed to her husband to dine at a restaurant, and she satisfied herself on scraps. Consequently, the inconvenience was not serious, and as cooks are rare as capercailzies, Mrs. Welsh was glad to have one even with the disadvantage of epileptic attacks.

Mr. Welsh placed himself and his time at the service of Arminell. He went with her to Brighton, St. Leonards, Worthing, Littlehampton, Bournemouth ; and finally Arminell decided on purchasing a small house at the last-named place—a pretty villa among the pines, with a view of the sea, a garden, a conservatory. The girl had scruples about troubling the journalist so much, but he insisted that his excursions with her gave him pleasure, and he did every-

thing he could for her, and did it in the most cheery, considerate and hearty manner.

Welsh was a shrewd man of business, and he fought hard over the terms before he bought, and keenly scrutinised the title.

Then ensued the furnishing, and in this Arminell did not trust Mr. Welsh. His ambition was to do all his purchases cheaply. He would have ordered her sets for her several rooms in Tottenham Court Road, and gloried in having got them at an extraordinarily low figure. Arminell took Mrs. Welsh with her when making her purchases ; not that she placed any value on that lady's taste, but because she was well aware that by so doing she was giving to her hostess the richest treat she could devise. There is, undoubtedly, positive enjoyment in spending money, and next to the pleasure of spending money oneself, is that of accompanying another shopping who spends money. After a day's shopping and the expenditure of a good many pounds, unquestionably one feels morally elevated. And one is conscious of having done meritoriously when one acts as a goad to a companion, urging her to more lavish outlay, spurring her on when her heart fails at the estimation of the cost. How mean you think your friend if she buys material at twopence-three-farthings instead of that which is superior at threepence. How vehemently you impress on her the mistake of purchasing only five-and-a-half yards instead of six. Margin, you urge, should always be given. It is false economy to cut your cloth too close. With what rigidity of spinal marrow do you sit on your tall chair and scorn the woman on your left who asks for cheaper Swiss embroidery at threepence-farthing, when your friend on your right is buying hers at a shilling. With what an approving glow of conscience do you smile when you hear your companion's bill reckoned up as over fifteen pounds ; and then you snatch the opportunity to secure a remnant or a piece of

tarnished material, with a haughty air, and bid that it be put in with the rest—it will serve for a charity in which you are interested : to wit—but you do not add this—the charity that begins and ends with home.

Next to the enjoyment of shopping with a friend, who is lavish of her money, comes the luxury of discussing the purchases after, of debating whether this stamped velvet was, after all, the right thing, and whether that tapestry silk would not have been better ; whether the carpet and the curtains will harmonise, and the paper for the wall accord with both.

It was a disappointment to Mrs. Welsh that Arminell did not have a dado with water-reeds and sunflowers, and storks flying or standing on one leg. “It is the fashion, I assure you,” said she, “as you may see in our drawing-room at Shepherd’s Bush.” But then, it was a shock of surprise and adoring admiration that came on Tryphœna Welsh, when, after having advised jute for curtains and sofa-covers, because so extraordinarily cheap, Arminell had deliberately turned to stamped velvet.

“Dear me !” said Mrs. Welsh to her husband one night, when they were alone, “how you do worship Miss Inglett. Not that I’m jealous. Far be it from me, for I admire her as much as I love her ; but I am surprised at it in you—and she related to the nobility. It is inconsistent, Welsh, with your professions, as inconsistent as it would be for Mr. Spurgeon to be found crossing himself in a Roman Catholic chapel.”

“My dear Tryphœna,” said James Welsh, “I do not deny that the British aristocracy has its good qualities—for one, its want of stuck-upedness. For another, its readiness to adapt itself to circumstances. It is part of their education, and it is not part of ours, and I don’t pretend to that which I have not got. They used to make wooden dolls with a peg through their joints, so that they would move their

limbs forward and backward, and that was all. Now there is another contrivance introduced, the ball and socket system for the joints, and dolls can now move their legs and arms in all directions, describe circles with them, do more with them than I can with mine. It is the same with the faculties of the aristocracy, there is a flexibility and a pliability in them that shows they are on the ball and socket system, and not upon the peg arrangement. I don't mean to say that there are not to be found elsewhere faculties so variable and adaptable, but it is exceptional elsewhere; among the upper classes the whole educational system is directed towards making the mental joints revolve in their sockets, and getting rid of all woodenness and pegishness. Look at Miss Inglett. She was ready to be just what you wanted—cook, nurse, butler, seamstress—and yet never for a second has ceased to be what she is, a tip-top lady."

"You talk, James, in a different way from what you used to talk."

"I'll tell you what stands in the way with us. Even if we be gifted with faculties on the ball and socket system, we are afraid of using them except as is allowed by fashion, and is supposed to be elegant. We are ever considering whether we shall not lose respect if we employ them in this way, set them at that angle, fold them in such a manner, turn them about in such another. I know once," continued Mr. Welsh, "I had burst my boot over the toe, just before I went for an important interview with an editor. I cut a sorry figure in his presence, because I was considering the hole in my boot, and whether my stocking showed through. I put my foot under the chair as far back as I could, then drew it forward and set the other foot on it. Then I hid it behind my hat, then curled it over in an ungainly fashion, so as to expose only the sole; and all the while I was with the editor, I had no thought for what we were talking about; I could not take my attention from the hole in my boot.

And it is the same with us who haven't an all-round and complete culture—we are conscious of burst seams, and splits, and exposures, and are anxious to be screening them, and so are never at our ease."

When Mr. Welsh began to talk, he liked to talk on uninterruptedly. His wife knew this, and humoured him.

"Connected with this subject, Tryphœna, is the way in which the aristocracy manage their trains."

"Their trains, James?"

"Exactly—their trains or skirts. You know how that it is not possible for you to be in a crowd without having your skirts trodden on and ripped out of the gathers. There used to be a contrivance, Tryphœna, I remember you had it once, like a pair of bell-ropes. You put your fingers into rings, and up came your train in a series of loops and folds, on the principle of the Venetian blind. But somehow you were always pulling up your skirt just too late, after it had been be-trampled and be-muddled. Now from what I have observed, the skirts and trains of the aristocracy are imbued with an imparted vitality from their persons, for all the world like the tail of a peacock, which it elevates when it steps about in the dirt. Their skirts shrink and rise of themselves, whenever a rude foot approaches, or they tread where the soil may bespatter."

"Now, really, James—how can human beings lift their tails?"

"My dear, I am speaking figuratively. If you do not understand—remain in ignorance. There is, as the clown says in 'Twelfth Night,' no darkness like ignorance. I suppose you know, my dear, what it is to be pressed upon and trampled on by those just behind you in the social ball? Well, some persons manage so cleverly that they do not get their trains crumpled; and others are in constant alarm and suspicion of everyone who approaches within a pace of theirs."

Welsh lighted a cigar.

"Don't you mistake me and think that I have given up my opinions, Nothing of the sort. I notice the difference between the aristocracy and ourselves, but I do not say that I do not estimate the middle class above theirs. On the contrary, I think our order of the nobility is the most honourable. To us belongs the marquissate."

"James, how can you talk such nonsense?"

"It is a fact, Tryphœna, that the marquis or margrave takes, or rather took, his title from the debatable ground he held. He was the earl who watched the marches against the barbarians; he protected civilization from overthrow. It was because he stood with drawn sword on the confines, armed *cap-à-pie*, that the counts and viscounts and the barons sat in clover at home and grew fat and wanton. We, Tryphœna, guard the marches, we occupy the debatable ground, and we have to be perpetually on the alert, to make blaze of beacons, blow cow's-horns, and rattle drums at the least approach or signs of approach of barbarism. Of course we are touchy, tenacious of our right, sensitive about our skirts, and must bluster and deal blows to protect them. We hold the banat, the military frontier between culture and savagery, and it is because of us that the noblemen and gentlemen of England can dwell at home at ease. Of course our hands are rough with grip of the lance and sword, and our boots smell of the stable. Heigh-ho!—here comes my Lady Fair—and not looking herself."

He stood up, and threw away his cigar into the grate and then went to the window and threw up the sash. Arminell entered in her bonnet; her face was sad, and her eyes were red as though she had been crying.

"Miss Inglett! I shall kill myself for having lit a cigar," said Welsh, "I am vexed beyond measure. I did not think you were going to favour us with your company. As for Tryphœna, she loves smoke as a salamander loves fire.

But—what is the matter? You remind me of a certain river I have read about in Bohn's translation of 'Herodotus.' The river flowed sweet from its source for many miles, but finally a tiny rill of bitterness entered it, and throughout the rest of its course to the sea the waters had lost their freshness."

"Not so, Mr. Welsh," said Arminell with a smile. "At least, I trust not. May I not rather have reached the point to which the tide mounts. It is not bitterness that is in me, but just a smack of the salt of the mighty far-off ocean that runs up the estuary of life, and qualifies sooner or later the water of every soul?"

"What has troubled you? I'm sure something has gone wrong."

"I have been with Thomasine to see your nephew."

"What—Jingles! you should not have done that."

"Thomasine had paid a visit to Mrs. Bankes, the landlady of the house where Mrs. Saltren lodged before she married and departed; and the good woman told the girl something about Mr. Saltren that made me uneasy. So I went to see him."

"You have acted inconsiderately," said James Welsh.

"I do not say that it was a proper and prudent thing to do, and yet, under the circumstances, justifiable, and I have no doubt you will forgive me."

"You must make a full confession before I pronounce the absolution," said the journalist.

"Thomasine goes occasionally to see the good woman of the lodgings and her servant, and she heard so sad an account of your nephew that she communicated it to me."

"What is the matter with him? I have not seen the cock-sparrow for three months, and what is more, I do not want to see him; I can never forgive him for what he has done."

"He knows how you regard him, and that is the reason

why he has not been to see you, and told you how he was situated."

"But—what has happened? Has he been run over at crossing? He is fool enough for even that to befall him."

"No, Mr. Welsh; I will tell you all I know, and then you will think more kindly and judge more leniently of Mr. Saltren. The landlady spoke to Thomasine because she was uneasy about him, and she is a good-hearted creature. It seems that when Mrs. Saltren married, Mr. Saltren was left without any means whatever."

"He had plenty of money. He sold Chillacot."

"He made over the whole proceeds to his mother. She has not left him a penny of it. From what I learn, she has given it to Captain Tubb to invest for her in a water-wheel and a pump."

"Marianne is fool enough for anything—except to speak the truth. What next?"

"After she had departed as Mrs. Tubb, your nephew was left absolutely without resources. He did everything that lay in his power to obtain a situation, first in one capacity, then in another. He even—he even"—Arminell's voice quivered—"he even offered himself as a shop assistant and was rejected. Disappointments, repeated day by day and week by week, told on his spirits and on his health. As he was without means, he frankly informed his hostess about his circumstances, and asked for leave to occupy an attic bedroom, promising to pay her directly he got employment. She did not like to turn him out, and I daresay she thought she would get her rent in the end from Mrs. Tubb, so she consented. But he has been living for many weeks on nothing but bread and a little thin tea without milk. He has sold his books and everything he could part with, and is now reduced to dire distress. He goes out every day in the desperate endeavour to find work, but his superior education, and his gentlemanly feelings

stand in his way. Now his health is failing, he looks too delicate for work, and no one will have him on that account. He does not complain. He goes on trying, but his daily disappointments have broken his spirit. It does seem a hopeless venture for a man of good education and exceptional abilities to find work in London."

"Sans interest," added Welsh. "Of old, interest was in the hands of the upper classes. Now it is in the hands of the lower."

"I heard a good deal of this from Thomasine," continued Arminell. "I could not bear it. I ran off to Bloomsbury to see Mrs. Bankes, and found her to be a very kind, feeling, and willing woman. She told me everything—how underfed Mr. Saltren was, how thin and shabby his clothes had become, what a bad cough he had got, and how long it was since she had been paid for her lodging."

"I made sure Mrs. Bankes would not omit to mention that."

"She is a most considerate woman. She said she had done him an egg of late, every morning, and charged him nothing for it, though eggs are at nine for a shilling, and he had had sixteen in all; so that she was, as she said, beside the cost of his lodging, nearly two shillings to the bad through these eggs—but she is a good honest soul, she told me he had worn out the soles of his boots and could not afford a new pair, and they let in the wet." Arminell stopped, she was choking.

Presently she went on, "Whilst we were talking, he came in at the house door, and I heard him cough; and then he went upstairs, with his hand on the bannisters, dragging his tired feet and his springless weight up the steep steps. He halted at each landing; he was weary and his breath failed. I listened till he had reached the very top of the house, and gone into his little attic-room where he sleeps, and reads, and eats, and dreams over his disappointments."

She stopped. She had clasped her hands on her lap, and was twisting, plaiting, and pulling her fingers.

"Then you came away to tell me," said Mr. Welsh.

"No, I did not."

"What next?"

"My heart was full. I went out into the lobby and stood there, and I began to cry. And then, all at once, I ran upstairs."

"What—to his room?"

"Yes—I went after him, I could not help it. He was so utterly lonely and so unhappy. Mrs. Bankes said that no one ever came to see him, he had no friends. It is dreadful to think of being alone in London for months without any one to speak to, that is, any one who feels for you, and knows about persons and things and places you have loved. I ran upstairs after him, and tapped at his door, and dashed right in on him."

The colour rose and fell on her cheek.

"I should have been happy for the occasion to have a talk with him, only the circumstances were so sad. My heart came into my throat when I saw him, and I held out my hand to him—no, in honour bright—I held out both hands to him. He was surprised. I sat down there and made him tell me everything. He did not complain, he was very brave, but he had lost hope, and he plodded on as in a treadmill, trying for work because it was a duty to seek it, not because he was sanguine of getting it. I do not know how long I was there; I insisted on having tea with him, and quite a nice little tea we had, and a chop—no, two chops with it. I ordered them, and I would have them, and, of course, Mrs. Bankes brought up Worcester sauce as well. Who ever knew a lodging-house without Worcester sauce? I am obstinate when I take an idea into my head. You know that. He was quite happy, I do believe, happier than he has been for months, sitting there with me,

taking tea, and milk in the tea, and talking about old times, and Orleigh—dear Orleigh!—and my brother Giles and papa.” Her heart was beating fast, so fast that it stopped her flow of words.

Mr. Welsh said nothing, nor did Mrs. Welsh, who looked at her husband questioningly, and then at Arminell.

“Once or twice I made him laugh, and the colour came again into his white face, and the brightness into his dull eyes. But when he laughed it brought on a fit of coughing.”

“Why did not the fellow come to me?” asked Welsh. “I have no patience with his pride—it was nothing but pride which kept him away.”

“Self-respect, perhaps, and resolve to make a way for himself if possible. You had discouraged him from attempting literature, and he had lost all faith in politics. Besides, he kept away from this house because I was in it, and he felt he had no right to come here whilst I lived with you.”

She began again to plait her fingers, and looked down at them with a little confusion in her face. Presently she looked at the miniature of the marine officer, Mrs. Welsh’s father, and said, with a laugh, “Do you know, Mr. Welsh, that Mrs. Saltren imposed on the landlady, and made her believe that she was going to marry an Admiral of the Blue. When Mrs. Bankes found out the truth, Mrs. Saltren, I mean Mrs. Tubb, said she had heard men-of-war so constantly spoken of as tubs, and nothing but tubs, and as her husband was a Tubb, she considered she had a right to speak of him as a naval officer. It is a shame to tell the story, but——”

“It is too good not to be told. Marianne all over.”

“And, Mr. Welsh, there was a doctor lodging on the first floor at Mrs. Bankes’, and he happened to see your nephew on the stairs, and hear him cough, so he made him step into his room and he examined his chest.”

“What did he say?”

“That there was constitutional delicacy, and that unless he went for a couple of winters to the south of Europe, and after that wintered at Penzance, Torquay, or Bournemouth, he would be a dead man. But, if he took proper care of himself and lived well, drank cod-liver oil and old port, kept out of east winds and from getting wet, he might yet make old bones.”

“That is out of the question,” said Welsh; “he shall have De Jongh’s cod-liver oil, and inhale carbolic acid, and wear Dr. Jaeger’s all-wool—to go to the south of Europe is impracticable.”

“Not at all.”

“My dear Miss Inglett, not another word. I will do all I can for the rascal. But I cannot afford that.”

“But I can.”

“I won’t allow it. I am very sorry for the boy, and will do my duty by him as his uncle; but I can’t send him to the Riviera.”

“But it is settled that he is going.”

“How? When?”

“Directly, and with me.”

“Nonsense, Miss Inglett.”

“And I have a house at Bournemouth.”

“That is true; but——”

“But I am going to marry him, so as to be able to nurse him and carry him off to Bordighera, and give him De Jongh’s cod-liver oil myself.”

“Miss Inglett, in reason!”

“It is settled. I settled it. I have paid Mrs. Banks for the eggs and all the rest. When we are off together we can talk at our leisure about Orleigh.”

CHAPTER LII.

ON DIPPERS.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, in his treatise on the composition of a picture, lays down as a necessity that a patch of blue sky should be introduced into every painting, an opening through which the eye may escape out of the constraint and gloom of the canvas. If the subject be a dungeon, in one corner must be a window through which the eye can mount to heaven ; if a forest, there must be a gap in the foliage through which the sun may strike and the free air blow. If a landscape under a grey canopy, or a storm at sea under rolling thunder clouds, there must be a rift somewhere through which the upper azure gleams ; otherwise the picture oppresses and the frame cramps, For this reason, the preceding chapter was entitled "A Patch of Blue Sky," for in that chapter a small opening was made quite in a corner, into that serene and super-terrestrial, that ethereal and sublime realm—matrimony.

For a good many chapters our hero and heroine have been in a poor way, inhaling London smoke, without sunshine enlivening their existences. From Orleigh Park to Shepherd's Bush, and from the elastic atmosphere of the country to the fogs of the metropolis, is a change which, considering the altered conditions of both—Jingles without a situation, living on bread and thin tea, and Arminell

without a home, living with third-rate people—was depressing to both, and the picture was overcharged with shadows. Therefore a little glimpse has been given into that heaven to which all youthful and inexperienced novel-readers aspire.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, moreover, insists on a proper balance of lights and shadows. He says that it is false art to accumulate dark spots on one side of a picture without relieving them with a corresponding number of luminous foci on the other. Now in this story the reader has been given three deaths. Therefore, there must needs be the same number of marriages to produce equilibrium. Accordingly, over against the dark points of Archelaus Tubb, Lord Lamerton, and Captain Saltren, we set off the bright combinations of Samuel and Joan, of Captain Tubb and Marianne, and of Arminell and Jingles. These are not, it is true, spots of transcendent brilliancy, double stars of the first order, but of subdued and chastened effulgence. Not many roses crowned the hymeneal altar of Sam Ceely, nor would an impassioned epithalamium suit the nuptials of Mrs. Saltren, just recovered from a touch of paralysis. Nor will the beaker of ecstatic love brim over at the union of Arminell and Giles Saltren, seeing that it is largely filled with De Jongh's cod-liver oil. When a cook has over-salted the soup, he mixes white sugar with it, and this neutralises the brine and gives the soup a mellowness, and velvety softness to the palate. On the same principle, having put too many tears into this tale, I am shaking in the hymeneal sugar in just proportions.

I know very well I am letting the reader into the secrets of construction, telling the tricks of the trade, but as this narrative is written for instruction as well as for amusement, I do not scruple thus to indicate one of the principles of the art of novel writing; and I do this with purpose, to gain the favour of the reader, who I fear is a little ruffled and

resentful, because I do not give a full and particular account of the marriage. But it really hardly merited such an account, it was celebrated so quietly—without choral song and train of bride's-maids, and without peal of bells. I am so much afraid that by omitting to make a point of the marriage I may offend my readers that I have let them into one of the secrets of the construction of a plot.

Among poor people a bottle of lemon-drops is set on the table, and the children are given bread to eat. Those little ones whose conduct has been indifferent are allowed only bread and point for a meal, but those who have behaved well are permitted to enjoy bread and rub. To their imaginations some of the sweetness of the lollipops penetrates the glass and adheres to their slices.

A novel is the intellectual meal of a good many readers, and it begins with bread and point, and is expected to end with bread and rub at the acidulated drops of connubial felicity. Usually the reader has to consume a great deal of bread and point and is only allowed bread and rub in final chapters. In this story, however, I have been generous, I have allowed of three little frettings at the bottle instead—indeed, instead of keeping one tantalising bottle before the eyes of the reader, I have set three on the table in front of him.

That I have transgressed the rule which requires the marriage of hero and heroine to be at the end of the book, in the very last chapter, I freely admit; but I have done this on purpose, and I have, for the same purpose, most slyly slipped in the marriage, or rather left it to the imagination, between the end of Chapter LI. and the beginning of Chapter LII. And what do you suppose is my reason? It is, that I want to *dodge the dippers*. The dippers are those readers who are only by an euphemism called readers. They stand by the course of a story, and pop a beak down into it every now and then, and bring up something from

the current, and then fly away pretending that they have read the whole story. The dipper generally plunges the bill into the first chapter, then dips into the last of the three volumes, and then again once or twice in the mid-stream of the tale.

These dippers are gorgeous creatures, arrayed in gold and azure, with bejewelled necks and wings and crowns. But in one matter they differ from all other fowl—they have no gizzards. Other birds, notably those of the barn door, when they eat pass their food through a pair of internal grindstones, and thoroughly digest and assimilate it. The dippers, being devoid of this organ, neither digest nor assimilate anything. They take nothing into them for the purpose of nutrition, but for the taste it leaves on their tongues. Consequently, the food they like best is not that which invigorates, but that which is high flavoured.

A dipper may seem very small game at which to fire a shot, but the dippers are the special aversion of novel writers. These latter have laboured to please, perhaps to instruct; they have worked with their pens till their fingers are cramped, and their brains bemuzzed, and they see the fruit of conscientious toil treated as a bird treats a nectarine—pecked at and spoiled, not eaten.

But I have headed this chapter "On Dippers," not because I intended to blaze at those little frivolous, foolish birds who dip into my story and let all they scoop up dribble from their beaks again, but because I have another class of dippers in my eye, about whom I have still sharper words to say. And see!—one of this order has unexpectedly dropped in on the Welshes—and that is Mrs. Cribbage.

The Reverend Mrs. Cribbage was not one of the kingfishers, but was a dipper of the cormorant or skua genus. She was not one to stand by the stream of a story and dip in that, but in the sea of life, and seek in that for savoury meat over which to snap the bill, and smack the tongue, and

turn up the eyes, and distend the jaw-pouches. The dippers of this order congregate on a rock above the crystal tide and chatter with their beaks, whilst their eyes pierce the liquid depths. They have no perceptions of the beauty of colour in the water, no admiration for its limpidity. They inhale with relish none of the ozone that wafts over it—their eyes explore for blubber, for uprooted weed, for mollusks that have been bruised, for dead fish, for crustaceans that have lost limbs, for empty shells invaded by parasites, for the scum, and the waste, and the wreckage, in the mighty storm-tossed ocean of life.

Aristotle, in his 'History of Animals,' says that most fish avoid what is putrescent; but the taste of the dippers is other than that of the fish. The dippers have no perception and liking for the freshness and fragrance of the sea, but have vastly keen noses for carrion. The suffering whiting, the crushed nautilus, the disabled shrimp, are pounced on with avidity, and the great penguin-pouch expands under the beak like a Gladstone bag full of the most varied forms of misery, of sorrow and of nastiness.

The skua is a dipper akin to, but more active than the wary cormorant and the clumsy auk. It is a lively bird, and darts on nimble wing over the sea, and when it perceives a gluttoned dipper in flight, it dives under it, strikes it on the breast, and makes it disgorge; whereupon it seizes the prey as it falls, for itself. There are skuas as well as cormorants about the coasts of the great social ocean, and there are birds with the voracity of the cormorant and the quickness and adroitness of the skua—of such was Mrs. Cribbage. It was part of her cleverness in getting the food she required to come with a whisk and blow at those who least expected her; and such was her visit or swoop on the Welshes.

Unfortunately for her, James Welsh was at home when she swept in, and he was quite able to hold his own before her.

"My dear," said he to his wife, "I think I hear the cook

squealing. She is in an epileptic fit. You had better go down into the kitchen and remain below as long as the fit lasts. Get the slavey to sit on her feet, and you hold her head. I will remain at the service of Mrs. Cribbage. I am sure she will excuse you. We have an epileptic cook, ma'am—not a bad cook when out of her fits."

"I am Mrs. Cribbage," said the visitor, "the wife of the Rector of Orleigh. We have not had the pleasure of meeting before, but I know your sister, Mrs. Tubb, very well; she is a parishioner and the wife of one of our Sunday-school teachers. Of course I know about you, Mr. Welsh, though you may not know me."

"I have heard a good deal about you, ma'am."

"Through whom?" asked the lady eagerly.

"Through my nephew."

"I have come to break to you some sad news about your sister. Poor thing, she had a first seizure on the death of her first husband, and she had a second immediately after her return to Orleigh as a bride. It was kept quiet. I was not told of it, nor was my husband sent for. Now a third has ensued which has bereft her of speech, and it is feared will end fatally. I have come to town for some purchases and on a visit to friends, and I thought it would be kind and wise if I came to see you and tell you what I knew."

"Very kind indeed, ma'am."

"I promised Captain Tubb that I would do so; he is not a great hand at letter writing, and I said that I could explain the circumstances so much better by word of mouth than he could with the pen. The case, I fear, is serious. She cannot speak."

"It must indeed be serious, if Marianne can't speak," observed Welsh dryly; "I'll run down to Orleigh to-morrow."

"How is your nephew? Mrs. Tubb hadn't heard of him for three or four months. I dare say anxiety about him has brought on the seizure."

"My late nephew?" Welsh heaved a sigh. "Poor fellow, he is gone. He always was delicate."

"Gone!—"

"Yes—to a warm place."

"It is not for us to judge," said Mrs. Cribbage, sternly.

"Well, perhaps not," answered Welsh; "but between you and me, ma'am, for what else was he fit?"

"I always considered that he gave himself airs, and I had an impression that he indulged in free-thinking. Still, he was not positively vicious. Nothing was proved against his morals."

"Others go to a warm place that shall be nameless, besides those who are positively vicious."

"Well," said Mrs. Cribbage, "that is true, sadly true. And now, to change the topic—how is Miss Inglett? Is she still with you?"

"Miss Inglett?" Welsh's eyes twinkled. He knew what the woman had come to his place for. It was not out of kindness to communicate to him his sister's condition. He felt the dig of the skua's beak in his chest.

"Oh yes, we know all about it. Marianne Tubb talked before she had the stroke and lost the power of speech. You must not suppose, Mr. Welsh, that we are taken in and believe that the Honourable Arminell Inglett died as has been represented, through the shock caused by her father's fatal fall."

"Ah! I remember seeing something about it in the papers. She died, did she?"

"No, no, Mr. Welsh, that will not do. Your sister let the cat out of the bag. She said that Miss Inglett was lodging here with you; and very boastful Mr. Tubb was about it, and much talk did it occasion in Orleigh. Some people would not believe it, they said that Marianne Saltren had been a liar, and Marianne Tubb was no better. However, others say that there is something in it. So, as I am

come to town, I thought I would just run here and enquire, and see Miss Inglett myself."

"We have had an Inglett here, certainly," answered Welsh, composedly, "and very decent pastry she made. She had a light hand."

"I do not comprehend."

"Are you in want of a cook, a nursemaid, or parlour maid? She was a handy girl, and Mrs. Welsh would be happy to give her a good character—a true and honest one, no reading between the lines, no disguising of defects. She did not drink, was not a lie-abed, and was clean in her work and person. I won't say whether she put her fingers into the sugar, because I don't know, and Mrs. Welsh keeps the preserves and candied fruit locked up in the side-board."

"I do not understand," said Mrs. Cribbage, gazing perplexedly at Mr. Welsh's imperturbable face.

"She was a sort of general hand with us," explained Welsh, "was that girl Inglett. We were sorry to lose her but she thought to better herself, and we do not give high wages. We can't afford to pay more than twelve pounds, and no beer. But the maid has the tea-leaves and dripping. That is—she had; but now that we have a cook, the cook arrogates the dripping to herself. We bear the young woman no grudge for leaving us. It is the way with girls, they will always be on the move, and if they can better themselves by moving, why not? What wages do you pay, ma'am? And how about perquisites?"

"You had a general servant named Inglett?"

"Yes, and our present housemaid is named Budge. Our cook is Mrs. Winter. The last cook we had drank, and ran up a ladder. It took several policemen to get her down. The ladder was of extraordinary height. It stood in a builder's yard. It was impossible for us to retain the woman after that. She had risen into notoriety. Then,

for awhile, the girl Inglett cooked for us ; she was not brought up to it, had never passed through her apprenticeship as kitchen-maid, but some women take to cooking as poets take to verses—naturally.”

“That is true,” said Mrs. Cribbage. Her mouth was gradually falling at the corners. She had expected to fish up a very queer and unpleasant bit of scandal, and, to her disappointment, began to see that she had spooned up clean water in her beak.

“Mrs. Welsh, seeing her abilities, may have advised the girl Inglett to take a kitchen-maid’s place—I cannot say. Has she applied to you for such a situation in your house, ma’am ? If so, I am sure Mrs. Welsh can confidently recommend her.”

“We thought,” said Mrs. Cribbage, in a tone of discouragement, “that is to say, Mrs. Tubb said most positively that—that the Honourable Arminell Inglett, daughter of Lord Lamerton, was not dead, but was lodging with you. And you *really* had a servant of the name of Inglett ?”

“Certainly, a general, as I said—and now you mention it, it does seem queer that she should have had such an aristocratic name, but I daresay she assumed it, as actresses do.”

“I was led by Marianne Tubb to suppose—”

“Was not that like Marianne !” Mr. Welsh went into a fit of laughter. † Mrs. Cribbage, with a ghastly smile, admitted that it was like Marianne Tubb, who was certainly given to boasting and romancing. However, she added, charitably—

“Really, it almost seems a judgment on her.”

“What does ?”

“The stroke. It was too bad of her to make us suppose that the Honourable Arminell Inglett had come to live in such a quarter as this. Then you really believe, Mr. Welsh,

that Lord Lamerton's daughter died of the shock, when she heard of her father's premature death?"

"I saw it so stated in the papers, and they are generally well informed. What sort of a person was she? I ask you, as the Rector's wife, was she worldly? Was she at all prepared for the great change?"

Mrs. Cribbage shook her head.

"I was afraid it was so," said Welsh solemnly. "Then I should not be at all surprised if she also had gone to the same warm place as my poor nephew."

"It is not for us to judge," said Mrs. Cribbage gravely; "still, if it be permitted us to look beyond the veil, I would not say but that she had. She was barely civil to me, once she was positively rude. Yes—I have no doubt that she also has gone—gone—"

"To the same warm place," added Welsh.

CHAPTER LIII.

ALLAH'S SLIPPER.

HAVING occupied an entire chapter with dippers, it may seem to the reader to be acting in excess of what is just to revert in the ensuing chapter to the same topic ; but if we mention dippers again, it is in another sense altogether.

In an oriental tale, a sultan was unable to conceive how that a thousand days could seem to pass as a minute, or a minute be expanded into a thousand days. Then a magician bade a pail of water be brought into the royal presence, and invited the sultan to plunge his head into it. He did so, and at once found himself translated to a strange country where he was destitute of the means of life, and was forced to support existence by hard labour as a porter. He married a wife, and became the father of seven children, after which his wife died, and as he was oppressed with old age and poverty, he plunged into a river to finish his woes, when—up came his head out of the pail of water. He stormed at the magician for having given him such a life of wretchedness. “But, sire,” said the magician, “your august head has been under water precisely three seconds.”

Now I do not mean to say that this story is applicable to my hero and heroine in all its parts. I do not mean that their history and that of the sultan fit, when one is applied to the other, as do the triangles A B C and D E F in the

fourth proposition of the First Book of Euclid, but only that there is a resemblance. Both Giles Saltren and Arminell had, as the expression goes, got their heads under water, and having got them there, found themselves beginning a new career, in a fresh place of existence, with fresh experiences to make and connections to form. The past was to both cut away as if it had never been, and, unlike this sultan, there was no prospect of their getting their heads up again into their former life. They must, therefore, make the best they could of that new life in which they found themselves; and, perhaps, Arminell acted sensibly in resolving that they should begin it together.

If Arminell had settled into her house at Bournemouth, and kept her pony-carriage and appeared to be unstraitened in circumstances, the residents of Bournemouth would, in all probability, have asked who this Miss Inglett was, and have turned up the name in the Red Books, and pushed enquiries which could with difficulty have been evaded; but when she set up her establishment as Mrs. Saltren, the case was altered; for the patronymic does not occur in the "Peerage" or in "Burke's Landed Gentry." It was a name to baffle enquiry, whereas Inglett was calculated to provoke it. It is true that Arminell might have changed her maiden name without altering her condition, but this she was reluctant to do.

In Gervase of Tilbury's "*Otia Imperialia*" is an account of a remarkable event that took place in England in the reign of Henry II. One day an anchor descended out of the clouds and grappled the earth, immediately followed by a man who swarmed down the cable and disengaged the anchor, whereupon man and anchor were drawn up again into the clouds.

Similar events occur at the present day. People, not men alone, but women, whole families, come down on us out of the clouds, and move about on the earth in our midst.

We know neither whence they come, nor anything about their antecedents. They talk and eat and drink like the rest of us, and are sometimes very agreeable to converse with, and take infinite pains to make themselves popular. Nevertheless, we regard them with suspicion. We are never sure that they will be with us for long. Some day they will release the anchor and go up with a whisk above the clouds into the fog-land whence they fell.

There are certain times of the year when meteoric stones descend, and there are certain belts on the surface of the earth on which they chiefly tumble. So is it with these people who come down on us out of the clouds. They usually fall into watering-places, and winter-quarters, and always drop down in the season at these resorts. Rarely do they descend into quiet country towns or rural districts among the autochthones, parsonic and squirarchical. We come on them abroad, we become acquaintances, we sit together at the opera, organize picnics together, take coffee at one table in the gardens where the band plays, yet we never know whence they have come and whither they will go. When we are at the sea-side with our family we meet with another family, the father and mother respectable, the young men handsome and polite, the girls æsthetic, and with—oh, such eyes! The young people soon strike up an intimacy, go boating, shrimping, nutting together; but we, the parents, have seen the intimacy thicken with some uneasiness, and do not like to see our son hang about the handsomest of the girls, or the most irreproachable of the young men so assiduous in his attentions to our daughter. Then we begin to institute enquiries, but learn nothing. Nobody ever heard of these people before. Nobody ever saw them before. Nobody knows where they made their money—yet money they must have, for the girls dress charmingly, and you cannot dress charmingly by the sea-side for nothing.

Then, all at once, when these people become aware that you are pushing enquiries, the blade of the anchor wriggles out of the sand, and up they all go, the young men waving their straw hats, and the girls casting sad glances out of their splendid eyes, and the old people silent about prosecuting the acquaintance elsewhere.

But—it must be admitted that these people who come down out of the clouds do not for the most part form as complete a family as that just spoken of. Either the monsieur or the madame is deficient, and we never know exactly where he or she is, whether above the clouds or under the earth.

No doubt that at Bournemouth, as at other sea-side places, persons appear at the beginning of the season, cast anchor for a while, and no one troubles himself about their antecedents, because they are supposed to be there for the season only; but were a young lady to anchor herself firmly, to buy a house and become a permanent resident, especially if she were pretty and rich, do you suppose that the Bournemouth residents would not examine the cable of her anchor, to see if the government thread be woven into it, and the anchor to discover the maker's stamp? Do you not suppose that they would set their telescopes and opera-glasses to work to discover out of what star the rope descended?

Arminell knew this. She brought with her out of her old world that caution which bade her enquire who a person was before she consulted with that person; and she was quite sure that wherever she set up her tent, there questions would be asked concerning her. She knew that there were Mrs. Cribbages everywhere, and that she would have to be on her guard against them. But her difficulties about keeping her secret were materially diminished by marriage.

The ceremony took place quietly, and no announcement of it was made in the *Times*, the *Queen*, and the country

papers. Immediately after it, she and Giles departed for Algiers. That was the warm place of which Mr. Welsh had spoken to Mrs. Cribbage. They went to Algiers, instead of Bordighera and Mentone, because Saltren had been to the Riviera before, and might be recognised.

Arminell had constituted herself the nurse of Jingles. She was the nurse not only of a sick body, but of an infirm soul. His morbid sensitiveness was in part constitutional, and due to his delicacy, but it had been fostered and been ripened by the falseness of the position in which he had been placed. Arminell had recovered her elasticity sooner than had he ; but then she had not been reduced to the same distress. Both had been humbled, but the humiliations he had undergone had been more numerous, more persistent than hers. She, at her moral rebound, had adapted herself to her situation and had done well in every capacity ; he had not been able to find any situation in which he could show his powers.

The body reacts on the moral nature more than we suppose, or allow for in others. We call those ill-tempered who are in fact disordered in liver and not in heart, and we consider those to be peppery who in reality are only irritable because they have gout flying about their joints. The morbidness of Jingles was largely due to his delicacy of lung, and with De Jongh's cod-liver oil would probably in time disappear.

When a man battles a way for himself into a position not his by right of birth, he acquires a tough skin. Siegfried, the Dragon-slayer, goes by the name of the Horny Siegfried because, by bathing in the dragon's blood, he toughened his hide—only between his shoulders, where a linden-leaf fell whilst he was bathing, could he be made to feel.

The successful men who have fought dragons and captured their guarded treasures are thick-skinned, impervious to hints, ridicule, remonstrances—you cannot pinch them,

scratch them, prick them, unless you discover the one vulnerable point. But Saltren had fought no dragons, only his own shadow, and his skin was as thin as the inner film of an egg—highly sensitive, and puckering at a breath. His vanity had been broken away, but his skin had not been rendered more callous thereby. Formerly he was in perpetual dudgeon because he imagined slights that were never offered. He still imagined slights, but instead of becoming angry at them became depressed.

As his health improved in the dry, salubrious air of North Africa, he began to interest himself in the antiquities, to explore ruins, to copy inscriptions, and so forgot himself in archæological pursuits. Arminell encouraged him to prosecute these subjects, and he became more enthusiastic on them; he regretted that the increasing heat would send him to Europe. However, on his arrival at Bournemouth, he found occupation in arranging his library and setting out his antiquities. Then he wrote an account of some explorations he had among the megalithic monuments near Constantine for a scientific journal, and this attracted attention, and led to correspondence, and to the article being reprinted with additions, and to a dispute as to the resemblances and dissimilarities between the Constantine monuments and the so-called Druidical remains in Britain.

The following winter Saltren was again at Algiers, and resumed his explorations with assiduity, spent much time in planning, sketching, digging, and formed a theory of his own relative to megalithic monuments contrary to that of Mr. Fergusson, whom he resolved to attack and crush. When summer came, at his particular desire, Arminell and he visited Denmark and Norway, where he examined such stone monuments as belonged to a prehistoric period, and then went with her into Brittany.

As he became known as an antiquary, his society was sought by men of like tastes, and so he came to have a

little circle of acquaintances, which tended to widen, and as those who came to know him through prehistoric rude stone monuments fell in love with his charming young wife, they insisted on their womankind calling and knowing her also. In vain did the ladies ask, "But, who was she?" They were crushed with the reply, "My dears, what does it matter what she *was*, she *is* the wife of one of our first authorities on comparative megalithology." So, by degrees, the young couple formed a coterie about themselves, and were no longer solitary and feeling as if they were outcasts.

Now and then Mr. Welsh ran down to Bournemouth and spent a day with them, and sometimes Mrs. Welsh brought the baby; but the Welshes were no assistance to them in social matters. The Welsh circle was of a different style of mind and manner and interest from that which formed round the Saltrens. It was not a circle which could wax excited over anything prehistoric, it was so completely engrossed in the present.

But the Welshes were always received with the utmost warmth and kindness by Arminell, who could not forget what she owed to them, and harboured for the Radical journalist an affection quite special, mixed with great respect. She knew the thorough goodness of the man, and she delighted in his smartness.

"Look here, Tryphœna," said James Welsh one day to his wife; "do you remember what I said to you about aristocrats and their trains? There is something else I will tell you. Once upon a time, say the Mussulmans, Allah, sitting on his throne in paradise, dropped the slipper off his foot, and it fell down into hell. Then he called to Adam, and bade him go and fetch it. 'What!' exclaimed Adam, 'shall I, who am made in the likeness of God, descend to the place of devils? God forbid!' Then Allah ordered Abraham to go after his slipper. 'Shall I go down into hell? I who am the friend of God! Far be it from me!'

was his reply. Then Allah turned to Moses, and he exclaimed, 'What! shall I, who am the law-giver of God, I who led the people out of the brick-kilns, shall I descend to the furnace? Away with the thought!' And David cried, when Allah turned to him, 'Nay, but I am the psalmist of God, press we not to go where demons yell discords.' And Isaiah had also an objection to go, for he said, 'I am the prophet of God.' Then Allah turned to Mahomet, and said, 'Wilt thou go after my slipper?' And Mahomet answered, 'I go at once, I am the servant of God.' Whereupon Allah exclaimed, 'Thou only art worthy to sit on my throne. All the rest are a parcel of cads'—or words to that effect."

"But, James, what has this to do with the aristocracy?"

"Be silent, Tryphœna, and listen. You and I, and all those who have clambered up the steps of the social heaven, are mightily tenacious of our places, and resent the slightest suggestion made to us to step below. We clutch at our seats and insist on every prerogative and privilege that attaches to it. Quite right that it should be so. We value the place we have gained, because it has cost us so much effort to attain it, and because we have to balance ourselves and cling so tight to keep ourselves from sliding down. But it is different with those who have been born and brought up on the footstool of the throne. They don't want a pat of cobblers'-wax to keep them firm on their seat, and they are not scrupulous about descending after Allah's shoe wherever it may have fallen. If they go down to hell they don't get smoked. They don't find anyone disputing their seats when they return. They can go and come, and we must sit and cling. That makes a difference. There is something of Allah everywhere, only it wants fetching up. Just see what has been made of that girl, Thomasine Kite. If ever there was a wilful, unruly creature, fated to go to the devil, it was she. And what

could you do with her? Nothing. You sat on a step just above her, and were not able to stoop for fear of toppling over. She is not the same girl now, and I hear she is going to be married to a sergeant of the coastguard. She is a well-conducted woman, passionately attached to her mistress, and no wonder,—Arminell has brought up Allah's slipper out of her. Look again at Jingles! I never had any opinion of him—a conceited, morbid monkey—and I could have done nothing with him; I lack the tact or whatever it is that is needful. But he is changed also, unobtrusive, self-respecting, learned, and modest—she has brought up Allah's slipper out of him.”

“You are a weather-cock, James. At one time you were all against the aristocracy, and now no one can do anything right unless he has blue blood in him. And yet—you call yourself a Radical.”

“So I am—a Radical still,” said Welsh. “I have not altered my opinions, but my mode of procedure. I do not want to pull the aristocracy down, but to pull all society up to it. I don't say that no one can fetch up Allah's slipper but a born gentleman, but I do say that no one who has not attained to the aristocratic ease in a superior position, is likely to descend to seek Allah's slipper, wherever it is to be found. I may have been wrong in thinking the best way of advancing society was by pinching the calves of those who sat above me, so as to make their seat intolerable, instead of lending a hand to help up those below to a share of my stool. Do you understand me, old woman?”

“I do not think I do. You have such a figurative method of speaking, James.”

CHAPTER LIV.

MEGALITHIC.

ONE bright summer day, when the sea was still and blue as the nemophyla, and twinkling as if strewn with diamond dust, Arminell was in her garden, with an apron on, gloves over her hands, a basket on her arm, and scissors for flowers.

At the end of the garden, partly screened by rhododendrons, was a summer-house, and outside it some lumps of plaster of Paris, pots of oil-paint, and slabs of slate, smeared with mortar. Occasionally the door of the pavilion opened, and a man issued from it wearing a brown-holland blouse, and on his head a paper cap. Particles and splashes of plaster marked his face, especially about the nose, where he had rubbed with a white finger.

"I will have it all cleaned away, Giles," said Arminell. "How are you getting on with the models?"

"Very well, only the plaster does not set as fast as I could wish. When I have got the dolmens of Gozo and Constantine, of Lock Mariaker and Madron to scale, side by side, the most prejudiced persons must agree that the similarity of construction is strong evidence of identity of origin. I can show on my map of megalithic monuments where the stream of dolmen builders travelled, how that it set from Asia, along the margin of the Baltic, and then

branched north over Britain, and south over Gaul. I can prove conclusively that they were not Gauls and Kelts. Just come and look at my cromlechs and dolmens in the rough. The resemblance *saute aux yeux*. We must establish their geographical distribution, and then compare their points of similarity and dis——”

“Please, ma’am, a lady and a young gentleman are in the drawing-room, and want to see you.”

“What names?”

“They gave none, ma’am.”

Arminell removed her apron, took off her gloves, and handed them and the basket to the maid, then went towards the drawing-room glass door opening upon the garden.

“Some people come to collect for the Jubilee,” said Arminell aside to her husband, as she passed.

“I heard they were about.”

In another moment, however, Saltren, who was engaged on his models of prehistoric rude stone monuments, heard a cry, and returning to the door of his laboratory, saw Arminell in the arms of an old lady, and at the same moment recognised her, and also the boy at her side. Then, without removing his blouse or his paper cap, he ran also across the garden, to welcome Lady Lamerton and his old pupil, Giles.

I do not think I could better illustrate the fact of the transformation that had been effected in Jingles, than by mentioning this incident. Can you—I cannot—conceive of Mr. Jingles as tutor at Orleigh Park, allowing himself to be seen smudged with plaster, in a paper cap, with a nose of chalky whiteness? On the present occasion he was so excited, so pleased to see dear Lady Lamerton and Giles again, that he forgot all about his own personal appearance, and even about the quoit of the Madron cromlech he was then modelling to scale.

Lady Lamerton had come to see Arminell, as Arminell could not visit her; and this was her first visit. She had not ventured before, because she did not think it prudent, not because her heart did not draw her to Arminell.

The most contradictory reports had circulated relative to the girl. Some had asserted that she was dead, others declared she was alive. Then it was said she was lodging in London, under an assumed name, and had made herself notorious by her advocacy of woman's rights, divided skirts, and social democracy. It was asserted that she had become a platform orator and a writer under the direction of that revolutionist, James Welsh. This was again denied, and said to rest on a mistake arising from James Welsh having had a general servant named Inglett. After a twelvemonth gossip ceased, for interest was no longer taken in a person who was no more seen, and who probably was dead.

And what does it matter, argued the cynical, whether she be dead or alive, as she is no more in society? We know nothing of those who do not appear, who have not been presented, who are not danced before our eyes.

In mediæval times there were *oubliettes* in all castles, and inconvenient persons were let fall down them to disappear for ever. Did they break their necks in falling? Or did they linger on, fed on bread and water, and languish for years? What did it matter? They were practically dead when the trap-door closed over their heads.

Every aristocratic, every gentle family has now what was anciently the prerogative of the mightiest barons only. Every family is encumbered with its awkward and troublesome members who must be dropped somewhere.

The Honourable Arminell Inglett had gone down an *oubliette*, but whether it were the family vault or a social limbo mattered nothing. We are too wise to ask about her. We never do anything inconsistent with good taste. We

let sleeping dogs lie, and don't push enquiries about dropped relatives.

When we are invited to dine at my lord's, we do not peep to see if the broken meats and the half-finished bottles be tumbled down under the feet to be mumbled and drained by the forgotten ones beneath. When we dance at my lady's Christmas ball, in the state ball-room, we know very well that below it is the family *oubliette*, but we scuffle with our feet to drown the moans of those *mauvais sujets* who lie below, and the orchestra sounds its loudest strains to disguise the rattle of their chains.

"My dear husband," said Arminell, "take Lamerton to see your models. They will interest him, and I will go in with mamma. Besides, you can clear his mind of delusions with respect to the Druids, which is really important. You know that there is a circle of stones on Orleigh Common, and in an unguarded moment the boy might attribute them to the ancient Britons."

"The matter is not one to joke upon," said Jingles, with a flicker of annoyance in his face.

Then he retreated to the pavilion with his old pupil, to show him the work on which he was engaged.

Arminell, quick in perception, saw that Lady Lamerton had noticed the transient cloud, so she said, with a smile, "Do you remember my husband when he was Giles's tutor? I mean, do you remember how sensitive he then was, how he winced when you came near him? I have heard of nervous disorders that make men thus susceptible. If you put a finger on them, they scream and writhe; if near them, they quiver with apprehension. He was in like manner touchy. Now, however, he is quite recovered. There is but one single point on which he is sensitive, and where a feather will make him wince."

"What is that?"

“Megalithic monuments.”

“Megalithic monuments, my dear?”

“Yes, mamma. He loves me dearly, but even I, who can do almost anything with him, would shrink from holding Mr. Fergusson’s view that Stonehenge was a work of the Anglo-Saxons. If it did not separate us, it would make a temporary estrangement. But, understand me, we are the greatest of friends, we never quarrel. I believe with all my soul that the rude stone monuments are prehistoric and pre-Keltic.”

“And what are his political views?”

“I do not think he has any. But he is deeply interested in the bill for the acquisition and nationalisation of the antiquities of the country. He says, and I agree with him, that if Britain is to maintain her place as a leading nation in the civilized world, she should conserve most strictly every prehistoric monument on the soil.”

Then Arminell made Lady Lamerton rest on the sofa; and she drew a stool to her feet, and sat there holding her hands.

“I dare say you cannot understand why I married him,” she said, after a short period of silence and mutual endearments. “But I was much alone, and oh! so solitary. I wanted a companion and did not relish the idea of an elderly eligible female, who, with bland perpetual smile, acquiescence in all my vagaries, non-resistance to my opinion, would have been intolerable to me. I could not do without a companion, and I could not endure the society of one. It is the vocation of these companions to be complaisant, to have no view, no opinion, no personality. Unless she were all that, she would be no companion; if she were all that, she would be insupportable to me. Then—with her I could not have talked about dear Orleigh.”

She stroked and then kissed her step-mother’s hand.

“Also poor Jingles—I mean Mr. Saltren—required a

cōpanion, a nurse ; some one to look after him day and night, and see that he changed his socks when they were damp, and drank fresh milk warm from the cow, and took tonics at regular hours, and had sweet-oil rubbed into his back between the shoulder-blades. I could not ask Mrs. Bankes to do that, or the housemaid, and there was really no one else who could be asked. I could not do this unless I married him, and so—I became his wife, and rubbed in the sweet-oil. Thank God, he is a strong man now ; but he has to be kept up to the mark. I go with him when he makes archæological excursions to the Morbihan, or to Scotland to plan old stones, for when he gets interested he forgets himself, and would work on in an east wind or in a sou'-west drizzle unless I were by to insist on his postponing the measurements till the weather mends. He is a dear, amiable fellow, and yields with the best grace. It is real pleasure to have to do with him. Now tell me something about Orleigh."

"About the people ? "

"O yes, mamma, about the dear people there."

"You know that Sam Ceely is married to Joan Melhuish, and she is devoted to that old impostor as you seem to be to your patient. They live now in the cottage which was occupied by Captain Tubb till he moved to the old quarry."

"Where is Patience Kite ? "

"She has been had up twice before the magistrates for obtaining money under false pretences. She is an inveterate witch, and might well have been left alone, but Mrs. Cribbage has taken a dislike to her, and set the police upon her, and has had her summonsed. Just now she is in prison, because she could not pay the fine imposed on her. How is her daughter, Thomasine ? "

"Thomasine !—I will ring and you shall see her."

"Not just yet, Arminell."

"No, presently. She is the belle of Bournemouth

Such a handsome girl, blooms into greater beauty than ever, and is so good and affectionate and steady. She is going to be married to a coast-guard man, a most respectable fellow."

"And now about yourself, Armie. Does time not hang heavy on your hands? You cannot be always engaged on pre-historic antiquities."

"Indeed, mamma," answered Arminell with energy, "time does not hang heavy on my hands. I have, of course, my dear husband, to consider first of all, but I have plenty to occupy me besides—duties thoroughly humdrum. I visit the old women, I read to the sick, I am an active patroness of the Girls' Friendly Society, and I teach every Sunday in the school."

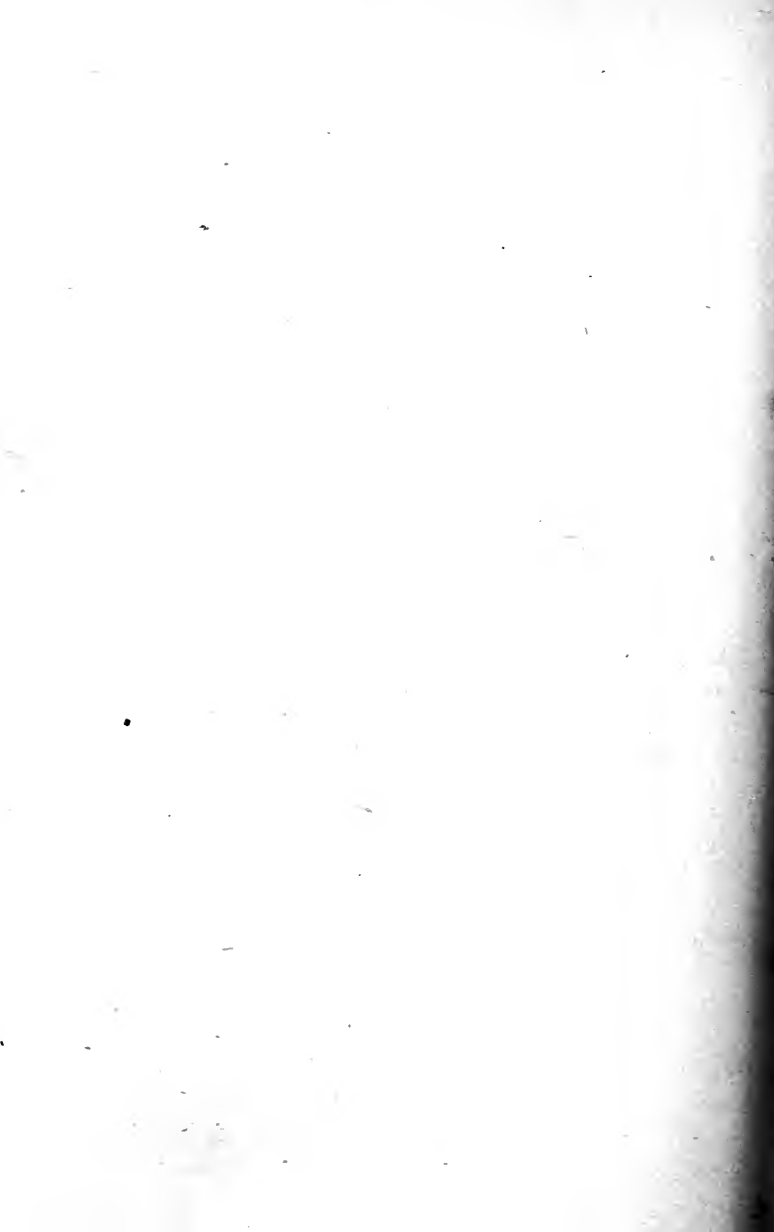
"You do! Why, Armie, you used to hate Sunday School."

"Dear mamma, I wish you could hear my class of girls, they have just acquired the list of apocryphal books which are not to be applied to establish doctrine. And, till I find some positive truth to teach, I content myself with making them repeat the names of all the homilies which no one has read, and which never are likely to be read. They have also been taught the meaning of Quinquagesima, Sexagesima, and Septuagesima."

"And you think you are really doing good, Armie?"

"I am using all my energies to teach my girls to grow up humdrum women."

THE END.



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